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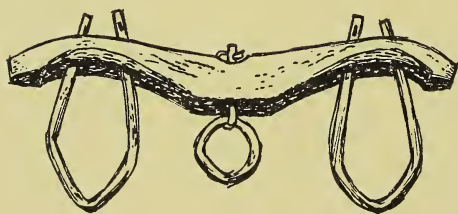
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1939a^a

Sherwood, Robert

Abe Lincoln in Illinois

LINCOLN ROOM



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ABE LINCOLN IN ILLINOS



A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

BY ROBERT E. SHERWOOD

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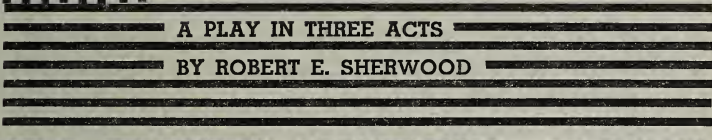
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A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

BY ROBERT E. SHERWOOD



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Lincoln Room

Abe Lincoln in Illinois was first produced by the Playwrights' Company, in New York, with the following cast:

CAST

(In the order in which they speak)

MENTOR GRAHAM Played by Frank Andrews
ABE LINCOLN " " Raymond Massey
ANN RUTLEDGE " " Adele Longmire
JUDITH " " Iris Whitney
BEN MATTLING " " George Christie
JUDGE BOWLING GREEN " " Arthur Griffin
NINIAN EDWARDS " " Lewis Martin
JOSHUA SPEED " " Calvin Thomas
TRUM COGDAL " " Harry Levian
JACK ARMSTRONG " " Howard da Silva
BAB " " Everett Charlton
FEARGUS " " David Clarke
JASP " " Kevin McCarthy
SETH GALE " " Herbert Rudley
NANCY GREEN " " Lillian Foster
WILLIAM HERNDON " " Wendell K. Phillips
ELIZABETH EDWARDS " " May Collins
MARY TODD " " Muriel Kirkland
THE EDWARDS' MAID " " Augusta Dabney
JIMMY GALE " " Howard Sherman
AGGIE GALE " " Marion Rooney
GOBEY " " Hubert Brown
STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS " " Albert Phillips
WILLIE LINCOLN " " Lex Parrish
TAD LINCOLN " " Lloyd Barry
ROBERT LINCOLN " " John Payne
THE LINCOLNS' MAID " " Iris Whitney
CRIMMIN " " Frank Tweddell
BARRICK " " John Gerard
STURVESON " " Thomas F. Tracey
JED " " Harry Levian
PHIL " " Kevin McCarthy
KAVANAGH " " Glenn Coulter
CAVALRY CAPTAIN " " Everett Charlton

SOLDIERS, RAILROAD MEN, TOWNSPEOPLE: Allen Shaw, Phillip Caplan, David Hewes, Dearon Darnay, Harrison Woodhull, Robert Fitzsimmons, Joseph Wiseman, Walter Kapp, George Malcolm, Bert Schorr, Bette Benfield, Ann Stevenson, Dolores Williams, Ora Alexander, Alfred Jenkins, Emory Richardson, McKinley Reeves, Elizabeth Reller.

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Humanities

SYNOPSIS

ACT I is in and about New Salem, Illinois, in the 1830's.

Scene 1—Mentor Graham's cabin. Late at night.

Scene 2—The Rutledge Tavern. Noon on the Fourth of July.

Scene 3—Bowling Green's house. Late in the evening. A year or so after *Scene 2*.

ACT II is in and about Springfield, Illinois, in the 1840's.

Scene 4—The law office of Stuart and Lincoln on the second floor of the Court House in Springfield. A summer's afternoon, some five years after the preceding scene.

Scene 5—Parlor of the Edwards house. An evening in November, some months after the preceding scene.

Scene 6—Again the law office. It is afternoon of New Year's Day, a few weeks after the preceding scene.

Scene 7—On the prairie at New Salem. Evening, nearly two years after the preceding scene.

Scene 8—Again the parlor of the Edwards house. A few days after the preceding scene.

ACT III is in and about Springfield in 1858-'61.

Scene 9—A speaker's platform in an Illinois town. It is a summer evening in the year 1858.

Scene 10—Parlor of the Edwards home, now used by the Lincolns. Afternoon of a day in the spring of 1860.

Scene 11—Lincoln campaign headquarters in the Illinois State House. The evening of Election Day, November 6th, 1860.

Scene 12—The yards of the railroad station at Springfield, February 11, 1861.

ABE LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS

ACT I

SCENE 1: *Mentor Graham's cabin near New Salem, Illinois. Late at night.*

There is one rude table, piled with books and papers. Over it hangs an oil lamp, the only source of light.

At one side of table sits MENTOR GRAHAM, a middle-aged, patient school teacher.

Across from him is ABE LINCOLN, a young man, gaunt, tired but intent, dressed in the ragged clothes of a backwoodsman.

MENTOR is leaning on table. ABE's chair is tilted back, so that his face is out of the light. MENTOR turns a page in a grammar book.

MENTOR. The Moods. (MENTOR closes book and looks at ABE.) Every one of us has many moods. You yourself have more than your share of them, Abe. They express the various aspects of your character. So it is with the English language—and you must try to consider this language as if it were a living person, who may be awkward and stumbling, or pompous and pretentious, or simple and direct. Name me the five moods.

ABE. The Indicative, Imperative, Potential, Subjunctive and Infinitive.

MEN. And what do they signify?

ABE. The Indicative mood is the easy one. It just indicates a thing—like “He loves,” “He is loved”—or, when you put it in the form of a question, “Does he love?” or “Is he loved?” The Imperative mood is used for commanding, like “Get out and be damned to you.”

MEN. Is that the best example you can think of?

ABE. Well, you can put it in the Bible way—like “Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses.”

MEN. Yes—here—(*Reaches for newspaper in the mess on the table.*) I want you to read this—it's a speech delivered by Mr. Webster before the United States Senate. A fine document, and a perfect usage of the Imperative mood in its hortatory sense. Here it is—read this down here.

ABE. (*Moves into light.*) “ ‘While the Union lasts,’ the Senator continued in the deep rich tones of the historic church bells of his native Boston, ‘we have high prospects spread out before us, for us and our children. Beyond that I seek not to penetrate the veil. God grant that in my day, at least, the curtain may not rise.’ ”

MEN. Don't read it off as if it were an inventory of Denton Offut's groceries. Imagine that you're making the speech before the Senate with the fate of your country at stake. Put your own life into it!

ABE. (*Reads.*) “ When my eyes shall be turned to behold for the last time the sun in heaven, may I not see him shining on the broken and dishonored fragments of a once glorious Union; on States dissevered, discordant, belligerent; on a land rent with civil feuds, or drenched, it may be, in fraternal blood! Let their last feeble glance rather behold the glorious ensign of the republic, now known and honored throughout the earth, not a single star of it obscured, bearing for its motto no such miserable ——”

MEN. “ Interrogatory.”

ABE. “—interrogatory as ‘What is all this worth?’ Nor those other words of delusion and folly, ‘Liberty first and Union afterwards’; but everywhere, spread all over in characters of living light, that other sentiment, dear to every true American heart—Liberty and Union . . .”

MEN. Emphasize the “*and*.”

ABE. “Liberty *and* Union, now and forever, one and inseparable!” (*He puts paper back on table.*) He must have had 'em up on their feet cheering with *that*, all right.

MEN. Some cheered, and some spat, depending on which section they came from.

ABE. What was he talking about?

MEN. It was in the debate over the right of any state to secede from the Union. Calhoun had pleaded South Carolina's cause—pleaded it ably. He said that just as we have liberty as individuals—so have we liberty as states—to go as we please. Which means, if we don't like the Union, as expressed by the will of its majority, then we can leave it, and set up a new nation, or many nations—

so that this continent might be as divided as Europe. But Webster answered him, all right. He proved that without Union we'd have precious little liberty left. Now—go on with the Potential mood.

ABE. That signifies possibility—usually of an unpleasant nature. Like, “If I ever get out of debt, I will probably get right back in again.”

MEN. (*Smiles.*) Why did you select that example, Abe?

ABE. Well—it just happens to be the thought that's always heaviest on my mind.

MEN. Is the store in trouble again?

ABE. (*Calmly.*) Yes. Berry's drunk all the whiskey we ought to have sold, and we're going to have to shut up any day now. I guess I'm my father's own son, all right. Give me a steady job, and I'll fail at it.

MEN. You haven't been a failure here, Abe. There isn't a man-jack in this community that isn't fond of you and anxious to help you get ahead.

ABE. (*With some bitterness.*) I know—just like you, Mentor, sitting up late nights to give me learning, out of the goodness of your heart. And now Josh Speed and Judge Green and some of the others I owe money to want to get me the job of postmaster, thinking maybe I can handle that, since there's only one mail comes in a week. I've got my friends, all right—the best friends. But they can't change my luck, or maybe it's just my nature.

MEN. What you want to do is get out of New Salem. This poor little forgotten town will never give anyone an opportunity.

ABE. Yes—I've thought about moving, think about it all the time. My family have always been movers, shifting about, never knowing what they were looking for, and whatever it was, never finding it. My old father ambled from Virginia to one place after another in Kentucky, where I was born, and then into Indiana and then here in Illinois. About all I can remember of when I was a boy was hitching up, and then unhitching, and then hitching up again. (*He changes the subject.*) As a matter of fact, Seth Gale and me have been talking a lot about moving—out to Kansas or Nebraska Territory. But—wherever I go it'll be the same story—more friends, more debts.

MEN. Well, Abe, just bear in mind that there are always two professions open to people who fail at everything else; there's school-teaching and there's politics.

ABE. Then I'll choose school-teaching. You go into politics, and you may get elected.

MEN. Yes—there's always that possibility.

ABE. And if you get elected, you've got to go to the city. I don't want none of that.

MEN. What did I say about two negatives?

ABE. I meant, "any of that."

MEN. What's your objection to cities, Abe? Have you ever seen one?

ABE. Sure. I've been down river twice to New Orleans. And, do you know, every minute of the time I was there I was scared?

MEN. Scared of what, Abe?

ABE. Well—it sounds kind of foolish—I was scared of people.

MEN. What on earth do you mean?

ABE. (*Serious.*) I was scared they'd kill me.

MEN. (*Also serious.*) Why? Why should they want to kill you?

ABE. I don't know.

MEN. (*After a moment.*) You think a lot about death, don't you?

ABE. I've had to, because it has seemed to be so close in the forest where I grew up. When I was no higher than this table, we buried my mother. The milk sick got her, poor creature. I helped Paw make the coffin—whittled the pegs for it with my jackknife. We buried her in a timber clearing beside my grandmother, old Betsy Sparrow. I used to go there often and look at the place—used to watch the deer running over her grave with their little feet. I never could kill a deer after that. One time I caught hell from Paw because when he was taking aim I knocked his gun up. And I always compare the looks of those deer with the looks of men—like the men in New Orleans—that you could see had murder in their hearts.

MEN. You're a hopeless mess of inconsistency, Abe Lincoln.

ABE. How do you mean, Mentor?

MEN. I've never seen anyone who is so friendly and at the same time so misanthropic.

ABE. What's that?

MEN. A misanthrope is one who distrusts men and avoids their society.

ABE. Well—maybe that's how I am. Oh—I like people well enough—when you consider 'em one by one. But they seem to look different when they're put into crowds, or mobs, or armies. (*He*

stands up.) I came here to listen to you, and then I do all the talking.

MEN. Go right on, Abe. I'll correct you when you say things like "caught hell."

ABE. (*Grins.*) I know. Whenever I get talking about Paw, I sort of fall back into his language. (*Stands up.*) But—you've got your own school to teach tomorrow. I'll get along.

MEN. Wait a minute. . . . (*He is fishing about among the papers. He takes out a copy of an English magazine.*) There's just one more thing I want to show you. It's a poem. Here it is. (*He finds place in magazine.*) You read it, Abe. (*He hands ABE magazine.*)

ABE. (*Reads.*) On Death, written at the age of nineteen by the late John Keats.

"Can death be sleep, when life is but a dream,
And scenes of bliss pass as a phantom by?
The transient (*He hesitates on that word.*) pleasures as a
vision seem,
And yet we think the greatest pain's to die.

(*He moves closer to the light.*)

How strange it is that man on earth should roam,
And lead a life of woe, but not forsake
His rugged path—nor dare he view alone
His future doom—which is but to awake."

(*He looks at MENTOR.*) That sure is good, Mentor. It's fine! (*He is reading it again, to himself, when the lights fade.*)

END OF SCENE 1

ACT I

SCENE 2: *The Rutledge Tavern, New Salem. Noon, July 4th.*

Table and two chairs down R., a stool at L. of this table. Down L. another table with a stool behind it and an old keg R. of it. Door L. leads to kitchen. Window down R., below which is a bench. Fireplace up L. in flat, in front of this a bench. L. upper corner is a stool. An-

other bench between fireplace and entrance door R. C. in flat.

BEN MATTLING is seated on bench up C.

Enter NINIAN EDWARDS and JUDGE BOWLING GREEN, followed by JOSH SPEED. JOSH is quiet, mild, solid, thoughtful and well-dressed. BOWLING is elderly, fat, gentle.

NINIAN is young, handsome, prosperous.

BOWLING. (Coming to above table R.) This is the Rutledge Tavern, Mr. Edwards. It's not precisely a gilded palace of refreshment.

(JOSH goes to door L. NINIAN comes down to R. of table R.)

NINIAN. Make no apologies, Judge Green. Anyway, the whiskey is wet.

JOSH. (Calls off L.) Miss Rutledge.

ANN. (Appearing in doorway L.) Yes, Mr. Speed?

JOSH. Have you seen Abe Lincoln?

ANN. No. He's probably down at the foot races.

JOSH. (Turns to BOWLING.) I'll find Abe and bring him here.

NIN. Remember, Josh, we've got to be back in Springfield before sundown.

(JOSH goes.)

BOWLING. Ah, good day, Uncle Ben. Have a seat, Mr. Edwards.

(They sit at table R.)

BEN. Good day to you, Bowling.

ANN. (Coming in from L.) Hello, Judge Green.

BOWL. Good morning, Ann. We'd be grateful for a bottle of your father's best whiskey.

ANN. Yes, Judge. (She starts L.)

BEN. (Stopping her.) And git me another mug of that Barbadoes rum.

ANN. I'm sorry, Mr. Mattling, but I've given you one already and you know my father said you weren't to have any more till you paid for . . .

BEN. Yes, wench—I know what your father said. But if a veteran of the Revolutionary War is to be denied so much as credit, then this country has forgot its gratitude to them that made it.

BOWL. Bring him the rum, Ann. I'll be happy to pay for it.

(TRUM COGDAL comes in.)

TRUM. Ann, bring me a pot of Sebago tea.

ANN. Yes, Mr. Cogdal. (*She goes out L.*)

(TRUM sits L. of table R.)

BEN. I have to say thank you, Judge.

BOWL. Don't say a word, Ben.

TRUM. Well, Mr. Edwards—what's your impression of our great and enterprising metropolis?

NIN. Distinctly favorable, Mr. Cogdal. I could not fail to be impressed by the beauty of your location, here on this hilltop . . . (*ANN comes in with tray.*) . . . in the midst of the prairie land.

TRUM. Well, we're on the highroad to the west—and when we get the rag tag and bobtail cleaned out of here, we'll grow. Yes, sir—we'll grow.

NIN. I'm sure of it.

(*ANN has been taking things off tray.*)

BOWL. Thank you, Ann.

ANN. Has the mud wagon come in yet?

TRUM. No. I been waiting for it.

(*ANN starts to go.*)

BOWL. Not by any chance expecting a letter, are you, Ann?

ANN. Oh, no—who'd be writing to me, I'd like to know?

BOWL. Well—you never can tell what might happen on the Fourth of July. (*He lifts his glass. NINIAN lifts bis.*) But I beg to wish you all happiness, my dear. And let me tell you that Mr. Edwards here is a married man, so you can keep those lively eyes to yourself.

ANN. (*Above table L.*) Oh, Judge Green—you're just joking me. (*She has gone out L.*)

NIN. A mighty pretty girl.

TRUM. Comes of good stock, too.

NIN. With the scarcity of females in these parts, it's a wonder someone hasn't snapped her up.

BOWL. Someone has. The poor girl promised herself to a man named McNeil—it turned out his real name's McNamar. Made some money out here and then left town, saying he'd return soon. She's still waiting for him. (*Looks L., then back at NINIAN.*) But your time is short, Mr. Edwards, so if you'll tell us just what it is you want in New Salem, we'll do our utmost to . . .

NIN. I'm sure you gentlemen know what I want.

TRUM. Naturally, you want votes. Well—you've got mine. Anything to frustrate that tyrant, Andy Jackson. (*He shakes his fist at picture of JACKSON on back wall.*)

NIN. I assure you that I yield to none in my admiration for the character of our venerable president, but when he goes to the extent of ruining our banking structure, destroying faith in our currency and even driving sovereign states to the point of secession, then, gentlemen, it is time to call a halt.

BOWL. We got two more years of him—if the old man lives that long. You can't make headway against his popularity.

NIN. But we can start now to drive out his minions here in the government of the State of Illinois. We have a great battle cry, "End the reign of Andrew Jackson."

(*JACK ARMSTRONG and three others of the Clary's Grove boys have come in during this speech. The others are named BAB, FEARGUS and JASP. They are a tough lot.*)

JACK. (*Going to door L.*) Miss Rutledge.

ANN. (*Appearing in doorway.*) What do you want, Jack Armstrong?

JACK. Your humble pardon, Miss Rutledge, and we will trouble you for a keg of liquor.

BAB. (*Down to bench by window R.*) And we'll be glad to have it quick because we're powerful dry.

ANN. You get out of here—you get out of here right now—you low scum!

JACK. I believe I said a keg of liquor. Did you hear me say it, boys?

FEARGUS. (*By bench R. of BEN.*) That's how it sounded to me, Jack.

JASP. (*Back of BOWLING.*) Come along with it, Annie ——

ANN. If my father were here, he'd take a gun to you, just as he would to a pack of prairie wolves.

JACK. If your paw was here he'd be scareder than you. 'Cause he knows we're the wildcats of Clary's Grove, worse'n any old wolves, and we're a-howlin' and a-spittin' for drink. So get the whiskey, Miss Annie, and save your poor old paw a lot of expenses for damages to his property.

(*ANN goes.*)

TRUM. (*In undertone to NINIAN.*) That's the rag tag and bobtail I was . . .

JACK. (*Crosses down L. of TRUM.*) And what are you mumblin' about, old measely-weasely Trum Cogdal—with your cup of tea on the Fourth of July?

BAB. (*To U. R. corner of table.*) He's a cotton-mouthed traitor and I think we'd better whip him for it.

FEAR. (*To U. L. corner of table, at same time.*) Squeeze that 'ar tea outen him, Jack.

JASP. (*Crosses L. past BEN; shouting.*) Come on you, Annie, with that liquor!

JACK. And you, too, old fat-pot Judge Bowling Green that sends honest men to prison—and who's the stranger? Looks kind of damn elegant for New Salem.

BOWL. This is Mr. Ninian Edwards of Springfield, Jack—and for the Lord's sake shut up, and sit down, and behave yourselves.

JACK. Ninian Edwards, eh! The Governor's son, I presume. Well—well!

NIN. (*Amicably.*) You've placed me.

JACK. No wonder you've got a New Orleans suit of clothes and a gold fob and a silver-headed cane. (*Picks up cane.*) I reckon you can buy the best of everything with that steamin' old pirate land-grabber for a Paw. I guess them fancy pockets of yours are pretty well stuffed with the money your Paw stole from us tax-payers—eh, Mr. Edwards?

BAB. Let's take it offen him, Jack.

FEAR. (*Moves down a step.*) Let's give him a lickin', Jack.

JACK. (*Still to NINIAN.*) What you come here for anyway? Lookin' for a fight? Because if that's what you're a-cravin', I'm your man (*ANN enters.*)—wrasslin', clawin', bitin' and tearin'.

ANN. (*Coming in to above chair c.*) Jack Armstrong, here's your liquor! Drink it and go away.

JASP. He told you to bring a keg!

(*ANN carries four mugs. BAB crosses to ANN.*)

JACK. (*Contemplating the glasses.*) One little noggin apiece? Why—that ain't enough to fill a hollow tooth! Get the keg, Annie.

(*BAB crosses to bench, sits R. of BEN.*)

FEAR. Perhaps she can't tote it. I'll get it, Jack. (*He goes out into kitchen.*)

ANN. Wait a minute! (*Follows him to door. Desperate. Turns.*) Aren't there any of you men can do anything to protect decent people from these ruffians?

NIN. I'll be glad to do whatever I . . . (*He starts to rise.*)

BOWL. (*Restraining him.*) I'd be rather careful, Mr. Edwards.

JACK. (*Sitting on table L.*) That's right, Mr. Edwards. You be careful. Listen to the old Squire. He's got a round pot but a level head. He's seen the Clary's Grove boys in action, and he can tell you you might get that silver-headed cane rammed down your gullet. Hey, Bab—you tell him what we did to Hank Spears and Gus Hocheimer. Just tell him!

BAB. (*Crossing down to R. of table R.*) Jack nailed the two of 'em up in a barr'l and sent 'em rollin' down Salem hill and it jumped the bank and fotched up in the river and when we opened up the barr'l they wasn't inclined to move much. (*Crosses down to bench.*)

JACK. (*Rising and crossing to BOWLING.*) Of course, it'd take a bigger barr'l to hold you and your friends here, Squire, but I'd do it for you and I'd do it for any by God rapscallions and sons of thieves that come here a-preachin' treachery (*FEARGUS returns with keg, sets it on fireplace bench and stands beside it.*) and disunion and pisenin' the name of Old Hickory, the people's friend.

BEN. Kill him, boys! You're the only *real* Americans we got left!

NIN. (*Rising.*) If you gentlemen will step outside, I'll be glad to accommodate you with the fight you seem to be spoiling for.

(*BAB to door R. of NINIAN.*)

TRUM. You're committing suicide, Mr. Edwards.

JACK. Oh, no—he ain't. We ain't killers—we're just bone-crushers. After a few months, you'll be as good as new, which ain't saying much. You bring that keg, Feargus.

(*They are about to go when ABE appears in door. He now is slightly more respectably dressed, wearing a battered claw-hammer coat and pants that have been "foxed" with buckskin. He carries the mail. Behind him is JOSH SPEED.*)

ABE. Hello, Jack.

JACK. Hello, Abe.

ABE. The mud wagon's in! Hello, Jack—boys. (*Ad lib.*) You fellows drunk yet? Hello, Miss Ann. Got a letter for you.

ANN. Thank you, Abe. (*There is a marked shyness in his attitude toward ANN. She snatches letter and runs out with it.*)

BEN. Abe, there's goin' to be a fight!

NIN. (*To JACK.*) All right—come on, if you're coming.

JACK. All right, boys.

(*General ad lib.*)

ABE. Fight? Who—and why?

JACK. This is the son of Ninian Edwards, Abe. Come from Springfield lookin' for a little crotch hoist and I'm aimin' to oblige.

(*ABE looks NINIAN over.*)

BOWL. Put a stop to it, Abe. It'd be next door to murder.

JACK. You shut your trap, Pot Green! Murder's too good for any goose-livered enemy of Andy Jackson. Come on, boys!

ABE. Wait a minute, boys. Jack, have you forgotten what day it is?

JACK. No, I ain't! But I reckon the Fourth of July is as good a day as any to whip a politician!

ABE. (*Amiably.*) Well, if you've just got to fight, Jack, you shouldn't give preference to strangers. Being postmaster of this thriving town, I can rate as a politician myself, so you'd better try a fall with me — (*He turns to NINIAN.*) And as for you, sir, I haven't the pleasure of your acquaintance; but my name's Lincoln, and I'd like to shake hands with a brave man.

NIN. (*Shaking hands with ABE.*) I'm greatly pleased to know you, Mr. Lincoln.

ABE. You should be. Because I came just in time to save you quite some embarrassment, not to mention injury. Got a couple of letters for you, Bowling. Here's your Cincinnati Journal, Trum.

JACK. Look here, Abe—you're steppin' into something that ain't none of your business. This is a private matter of patriotic honor . . .

ABE. Everything in this town is my business, Jack. It's the only kind of business I've got. And besides—I saw Hannah down by the grove and she says to tell you to come on to the picnic and that means *now* or she'll give the cake away to the Straders children and you and the boys'll go hungry. So get moving.

FEAR. (*Crosses to L. of JACK. To JACK.*) Are you goin' to let Abe talk you out of it?

ABE. Sure he is. (*He turns to TRUM.*) Say, Trum—if you ain't using that Journal for a while, would you let me have a read?

TRUM. By all means, Abe. Here you are. *(He tosses paper to ABE.)*

ABE. Thanks. *(He turns again to JACK.)* Better hurry, Jack—or you'll get a beatin' from Hannah. *(He starts to take wrapper off, as he goes over to a chair at L. JACK looks at ABE for a moment, then laughs.)*

JACK. *(To NINIAN.)* All right! Abe Lincoln's saved your hide. I'll consent to callin' off the fight just because he's a friend of mine.

ABE. And also because I'm the only one around here you can't lick.

JACK. But I just want to tell you, Mr. Ninian Edwards, Junior, that the next time you come around here a-spreadin' pisen and——

ABE. Go on, Jack, Hannah's waiting.

JACK. *(Over to ABE.)* I'm going, Abe. But I warn you—you'd better stop this foolishness of reading, reading, reading morning, noon and night or you'll be getting soft, and you won't be the same fighting man you are now. And it would break my heart to see you licked by anybody—including me. *(He laughs, slaps ABE on back, and turns to go.)* Glad to have met you, Mr. Edwards. *(He makes a feinting pass at NINIAN as he goes out door, followed by BAB and JASP. FEARGUS picks up keg and starts after them.)*

NIN. *(To JACK.)* It's been a pleasure. *(Returns to seat R. of table.)*

ABE. Where'd you get that keg, Feargus?

FEAR. *(At door, nervously.)* Jack told me to take it outen Mis' Rutledge's kitchen, and I——

ABE. Well, put it down—— If you see Seth Gale, tell him I've got a letter for him.

FEAR. I'll tell him, Abe. *(He puts down keg and goes out.)*

JOSH. *(Laughs and comes up to table.)* Congratulations, Ninian. I shouldn't have enjoyed taking you home to Mrs. Edwards after those boys had done with you. *(Picks up drink from table and goes over L.)*

NIN. *(Grinning.)* I was aware of the certain consequences, Josh. *(Turns to ABE—as JOSH sits on bench.)* I'm deeply in your debt, Mr. Lincoln.

ABE. Never mind any thanks, Mr. Edwards. Jack Armstrong talks big but he means well.

NIN. Won't you join us in a drink?

ABE. No, thank you. *(He's reading paper.)*

(BOWLING fills glasses.)

BOWL. I'm going to have another! I don't mind telling you, I'm still trembling. *(He hands a glass to NINIAN, then drinks himself.)*

JOSH. Put that paper down, Abe. We want to talk to you.

ABE. Me? What about? *(He looks curiously at JOSH, BOWLING and NINIAN.)*

JOSH. I brought Mr. Edwards here for the sole purpose of meeting you—and with his permission, I shall tell you why.

NIN. Go right ahead, Josh.

(All are looking intently at ABE.)

JOSH. Abe—how would you like to run for the State Assembly?

ABE. *(Looks at group R.)* When?

JOSH. Now—for the election in the fall.

ABE. Why?

NIN. Mr. Lincoln, I've known you for only a few minutes, but that's long enough to make me agree with Josh Speed that you're precisely the type of man we want. The whole Whig organization will support your candidacy.

ABE. Is this your idea, Josh?

JOSH. *(Smiling.)* Oh, no, Abe—you're the people's choice.

TRUM. What do you think of it, Bowling?

BOWL. *(Heartily.)* I think it's as fine a notion as I ever heard. Why, Abe—I can hear you making speeches right and left, taking your stand on all the issues—secession, Texas, the National Bank crisis, abolitionism—it'll be more fun than we ever had in our lives!

ABE. *(Rises, crosses L.)* Isn't anybody going to ask what I think?

JOSH. *(Laughs.)* All right, Abe—I'll ask you.

ABE. *(After a moment's pause.)* It's a comcial notion, all right—and I don't know if I can give you an answer to it, offhand. But my first hasty impression is that I don't think much of it.

BOWL. Don't overlook the fact that, if elected, your salary would be three whole dollars a day.

ABE. That's fine money. No doubt of that. And I see what you have in mind, Bowling. I owe you a considerable sum of money; and if I stayed in the legislature for, say, twenty years, I'd be able to pay off . . . \$2.50 a day—— *(He is figuring it up on his fingers.)*

BOWL. I'm not thinking about the debts, Abe.

ABE. I know you ain't, Bowling. But I've got to. And so should you, Mr. Edwards. The Whig Party is the party of sound money and God save the National Bank, ain't it?

NIN. Why, yes—among other things . . .

ABE. Well, then—how would it look if you put forward a candidate who has demonstrated no earning power but who has run up the impressive total of fifteen hundred dollars of debts?

BOWL. (*To NINIAN.*) I can tell you something about those debts. Abe started a grocery store in partnership with an unfortunate young man named Berry. Their stock included whiskey, and Berry started tapping the keg until he had consumed all the liquid assets. (*Chuckles.*) So the store went bankrupt, and was non compos mentis, through drink—and Abe voluntarily assumed all the obligations. Fifteen hundred dollars' worth! That may help to explain to you, Mr. Edwards, why we think pretty highly of him around here.

NIN. It's a sentiment with which I concur most heartily.

ABE. I thank you one and all for your kind tributes, but don't overdo them, or I'll begin to think that three dollars a day ain't enough!

JOSH. (*Rises and takes a step toward ABE.*) What's the one thing that you want most, Abe? You want to learn. This will give you your chance to get at a good library, to associate with the finest lawyers in the State.

ABE. I've got a copy of Blackstone already. Found it in an old junk barrel. And how can I tell that the finest lawyers would welcome association with *me*?

NIN. You needn't worry about that. I saw how you dealt with those ruffians. You quite obviously know how to handle men.

ABE. I can handle the Clary's Grove boys because I can outwrasse them—but I can't go around Sangamon County throwing *all* the voters.

BOWL. (*Laughing.*) I'll take a chance on that, Abe.

(*JOSH goes up to fireplace bench—sits.*)

ABE. (*Crossing and sitting on table L. To NINIAN.*) Besides—how do you know that my political views would agree with yours? How do you know I wouldn't say the wrong thing?

NIN. What *are* your political leanings, Mr. Lincoln?

ABE. They're all toward staying out. What sort of leanings do you want?

NIN. We need good conservative men to counteract all the radical firebrands that have swept over this country in the wake of An-

drew Jackson. We've got to get this country back to first principles!

ABE. Well—I'm conservative, all right. If I got into the legislature you'd never catch me starting any movements for reform or progress. I'm pretty certain I wouldn't even have the nerve to open my mouth.

JOSH. I told you, Niniam—he's just the type of candidate you're looking for.

(They both laugh and NINIAN rises.)

NIN. *(Crossing to ABE.)* As postmaster, Mr. Lincoln, you're in an excellent position to establish contacts. While delivering letters, you can also deliver speeches and campaign literature, with which our headquarters will keep you supplied. The fact is—*(Crosses to ABE.)* we want to spike the rumor that ours is the party of the more privileged classes. That is why we seek men of the *plain* people for candidates —

ABE. Would you supply me with a suit of store clothes? A candidate mustn't look too plain.

NIN. *(Glances at BOWLING. Smiling.)* I think then that could be arranged, eh, Judge?

BOWL. I think so.

NIN. So—think it over, Mr. Lincoln, and realize that this is opportunity unlimited in scope. Just consider what it means to be starting up the ladder in a nation which is now expanding southward, across the vast area of Texas; and westward, to the Empire of the Californias on the Pacific Ocean. We're becoming a continent, Mr. Lincoln—and all that we need is men! *(He looks at his watch. BOWLING, TRUM and JOSH rise. Turns to BOWLING and TRUM and back.)* And now, gentlemen, if you will excuse me—I must put in an appearance at the torch-light procession in Springfield this evening, so I shall have to be moving on. Good-bye, Mr. Lincoln. This meeting has been a happy one for me.

ABE. *(Shaking hands.)* Good-bye, Mr. Edwards. Good luck in the campaign.

NIN. And the same to you. *(Turns and goes out quickly.)*

(TRUM starts to go.)

ABE. *(Crossing up to door. Stops TRUM.)* Oh, Trum—here's your Cincinnati Journal.

TRUM. Go ahead and finish it, Abe. I won't be looking at it yet a while.

ABE. Thanks, Trum. I'll leave it at your house.

(TRUM and NINIAN have gone.)

BOWL. (*As he is going out.*) I'll see you later, Abe. Tell Ann I'll be back to pay for the liquor.

ABE. I'll tell her, Bowling. (BOWLING has gone. JOSH is looking at ABE who, after a moment, turns to him. ABE, crossing to JOSH.) I'm surprised at you, Josh. I thought you were my friend.

JOSH. I know, Abe. But Ninian Edwards asked me is there anybody in that God-forsaken town of New Salem that stands a chance of getting votes, and the only one I could think of was you. I can see you're embarrassed by this—and you're annoyed. But—whether you like it or not—you've got to grow; and here's your chance to get a little scrap of importance.

ABE. Am I the kind that wants importance?

JOSH. You'll deny it, Abe—but you've got a funny kind of vanity—which is the same as saying you've got some pride—and it's badly in need of nourishment. So, if you'll agree to this—I don't think you'll be sorry for it or feel that I've betrayed you.

(SETH GALE comes in to U. R. C.)

SETH. Hey, Abe—Feargus said you've got a letter for me.

ABE. (*Turns.*) Yes.

SETH. Hello, Mr. Speed.

JOSH. How are you, Mr. Gale?

ABE. (*Giving SETH letter.*) Here you are, Seth. (*He hands him letter.*)

(SETH takes it to L., sits down and starts to read.)

JOSH. (*Crossing to door and out.*) I've got to get home to Springfield, Abe, but I'll be down again in a week or so.

ABE. (*Goes to chair L. of table R., sits.*) I'll be here, Josh.

BEN. (*Coming down to chair above table L.; angrily.*) Are you going to do it, Abe? Are you goin' to let them make you into a candidate?

ABE. I ain't had time to think about it yet.

BEN. Well—I tell you to stop thinkin' before it's too late. Don't let 'em get you. Don't let 'em put you in a store suit that's the uniform of degradation in this miserable country. You're an honest man, Abe Lincoln. You're a good-for-nothin', debt-ridden loafer—but you're an honest man. And you have no place in that

den of thieves that's called gov'ment. They'll corrupt you as they've corrupted the whole damn United States. Look at Washington, look at Jefferson, and John Adams—*(He points grandly to the pictures.)* where are they today? Dead! And everything they stood for and fought for and won—that's dead too. *(ANN comes in, clears table L. and goes out.)* Why—we'd be better off if we was all black niggers held in the bonds of slavery. *They get fed—they get looked after when they're old and sick. (ABE turns and looks at ANN. She does not see him.)* But you don't care—you ain't listenin' to me, neither . . . *(He starts slowly toward door.)*

ABE. Of course I'm listening, Ben.

BEN. *(Crossing up into doorway.)* No, you ain't. I know. You're goin' to the assembly and join the wolves who're feedin' off the carcass of Liberty. *(He has gone.)*

ABE. You needn't worry. I'm not going. *(ANN crosses to R. to pick up glasses, She seems extremely subdued. ABE looks at her, curiously.)* Bowling Green said to tell you he'd be back later, to pay you what he owes.

ANN. *(Curtly.)* That's all right. *(ANN puts glasses and bottles on tray and picks it up.)*

(ABE jumps to his feet.)

ABE. Can I help you with that, Ann?

ANN. *(Irritably.)* No—leave it alone! I can carry it! *(She starts across to L.)*

ABE. Excuse me, Ann . . .

ANN. *(Stopping u. c.)* Well?

ABE. Would you come back after you're finished with that? I—I'd like to talk to you. *(SETH has finished the letter. Its contents seem to have depressed him.)*

ANN. All right. I'll talk to you—if you want. *(She goes out.)*

(SETH comes to R. of table.)

SETH. Abe . . . Abe—that letter was from my folks back in Maryland. It means—I guess I've got to give up the dream we had of moving out into Nebraska Territory, for the time being, at any rate.

ABE. What's happened, Seth?

SETH. *(Despondently.)* Well—for one thing the old man's took sick, and he's pretty feeble.

ABE. I'm sorry to hear that, Seth.

SETH. So am I. They've sent for me to come back and work the

farm. Measly little thirty-six acres—sandy soil. I tell you, Abe, it's a bitter disappointment to me, when I had my heart all set on going out into the West. And the worst of it is—I'm letting you down on it, too.

ABE. (*With a glance toward kitchen.*) Don't think about that, Seth. Maybe I won't be able to move for a while, myself. And when your father gets to feeling better, you'll come back . . .

SETH. He won't get to feeling better. Not at his age. I'll be stuck there, just like he was. I'll be pushed in and cramped all the rest of my life, till the malaria gets me, too . . . Well—there's no use crying about it. If I've got to go back East, I've got to go. I'll tell you good-bye, Abe, before I leave. (*He goes out, R. C.*)

(ANN comes back from kitchen. ABE looks at her, she at him.)

ANN. Well—what is it, Abe?

ABE. I just thought—you might like to talk to me.

ANN. (*Sharply.*) What about?

ABE. That letter you got from New York State.

ANN. What do you know about that letter?

ABE. I'm the postmaster. I know more than I ought to about people's private affairs. I couldn't help seeing that that was the handwriting of Mr. McNamar—or McNeil. And I couldn't help seeing, from the look on your face, that the bad news you've been afraid of has come.

(ANN looks at him with surprise. He is a lot more observant than she had thought. Her attitude of hostility softens. She sits down on bench.)

ANN. Whatever the letter said, it's no concern of yours, Abe.

ABE. I know that, Ann. But—it appears to me that you've been crying—and it makes me sad to think that something could have hurt you. The thing is—I think quite a lot of you—always have—ever since I first came here, and met you. I wouldn't mention it, only when you're distressed about something it's a comfort sometimes even to find a pair of ears to pour your troubles into—and the Lord knows my ears are big enough to hold a lot.

(ANN rewards him with a tender smile. Into her sharp little mind has darted the thought that perhaps he can be of help, not much help, but some.)

ANN. You're a Christian gentleman, Abe Lincoln.

ABE. No, I ain't. I'm a plain, common sucker with a shirttail so short I can't sit on it.

ANN. (*Laughs.*) Well—sit down anyway, Abe—here, by me. (ABE crosses and sits near her.) You can always say something to make a person laugh, can't you?

ABE. Well—I don't even have to *say* anything. A person just has to look at me.

ANN. You're right about that letter, Abe. It's the first I've heard from him in months—and now he says he's delayed by family troubles and doesn't know when he'll be able to get to New Salem again. By which he probably means—never.

ABE. I wouldn't say that, Ann.

ANN. I would. (*She looks at him.*) I reckon you think I'm a silly fool for ever having promised myself to Mr. McNeil.

ABE. I think no such thing. I liked him myself, and still do, and whatever reasons he had for changing his name I'm sure were honorable. He's a smart man, and a handsome one—and I—I wouldn't blame any girl for—loving him.

ANN. I guess I don't love him, Abe. I guess I couldn't love anybody that was as—as faithless as that.

ABE. (*Trying to appear unconcerned.*) Well, then, there's nothing to fret about. Now—poor Seth Gale—he got some *really* bad news. His father's sick and he has to give up his dream which was to go and settle out West.

ANN. (*Looks at him.*) I don't believe you know much about females, Abe.

ABE. Probably I don't—although I certainly spend enough time thinking about 'em.

ANN. You're a big man, and you can lick anybody, and you can't understand the feelings of somebody who is weak. But—I'm a female, and I can't help thinking what they'll be saying about me—all the old gossips, all over town. They'll make it out that he deserted me; I'm a rejected woman. They'll give me their sympathy to my face, but they'll snigger at me behind my back.

ABE. Yes—that's just about what they would do. But—would you let *them* disturb you?

ANN. I told you—it's just weakness—it's just vanity. It's something you couldn't understand, Abe. (*She has crossed to window and is staring out.*)

(ABE twists in his chair to look at her.)

ABE. Maybe I can understand it, Ann. I've got a kind of vanity myself. Josh Speed said so, and he's right. . . . It's—it's nothing but vanity that's kept me from declaring my inclinations toward you. (*She turns, amazed, and looks at him.*) You see, I don't like to be sniggered at, either. I know what I am—and I know what I look like—and I know that I've got nothing to offer any girl that I'd be in love with.

ANN. (*Coming down to above table R.*) Are you saying that you're in love with me, Abe?

ABE. (*Rises. With deep earnestness.*) Yes—I am saying that. (*He stands facing her. She looks intently into his eyes.*) I've been loving you—a long time—with all my heart. You see, Ann, you're a particularly fine girl. You've got sense, and you've got bravery—those are two things that I admire particularly. And you're powerful good to look at, too. So it's only natural I should have a great regard for you. But—I don't mean to worry you about it, Ann. I only mentioned it because—if you would do me the honor of keeping company with me for a while, it might shut the old gossips' mouths. They'd figure you'd chucked McNeil for—for someone else. Even me.

(*ANN goes to him, puts her hand on his hand, which is clutching a lapel.*)

ANN. I thought I knew you pretty well, Abe. But I didn't.

ABE. Why do you say that? Do you consider I was too forward in speaking out as I did?

ANN. (*Gravely.*) No, Abe . . . I've always thought a lot of you—the way I thought you were. But—the idea of love between you and me—I can't say how I feel about that, because now you're like some other person, that I'm meeting for the first time.

ABE. (*Quietly.*) I'm not expecting you to feel anything for me. I'd never dream of expecting such a thing.

ANN. I know that, Abe. You'd be willing to give everything you have and never expect anything in return. Maybe you're different in that way from any man I ever heard of. And I can tell you this much—now and truthfully, Abe—if I ever do love you, I'll be happy about it—and lucky, to be loving a good, decent man. . . . If you just give me time, Abe—to think about it. . . .

ABE. (*Unable to believe his eyes and ears.*) You mean—if you took time—you might get in your heart something like the feeling I have for you?

ANN. (*With great tenderness.*) I don't know, Abe. But I do know that you're a man who could fill anyone's heart—yes, fill it and warm it and make it glad to be living.

(*He stares at her so hard that she again looks away from him. He takes her hand between both of his and works it around in his terrific grasp. It is some time before he finds words.*)

ABE. Ann—I've always tried hard to believe what the orators tell us—that this is a land of equal opportunity for all. But I've never been able to believe it, any more than I could believe God made all men in His own image. But—if I could win you, Ann—I'd be willing to disbelieve everything I've ever seen with my own eyes, and have faith in everything that I've ever dreamed of. (*Both are silent for a moment.*) But—I'm not asking you to say anything now. And I won't ask you until the day comes when I know I've got a right to. (*He lets go of her hand, picks up the newspaper, rises, and walks quickly toward door.*)

ANN. Abe! Where are you going?

ABE. I'm going to find Bowling Green and tell him a good joke. (*He grins. He is standing in the doorway.*)

ANN. (*Worried.*) A joke? What about?

ABE. I'm going to tell him that I'm a candidate for the assembly of the State of Illinois. (*He goes.*)

(*The light fades.*)

END OF SCENE 2

ACT I

SCENE 3: Bowling Green's house near New Salem.

It is a small room, but the walls are lined with books and family pictures. In C. is a table with a lamp on it. Another light—a candle in a glass globe—is on a book-case at back, toward R. There are comfortable chairs at either side of table, and a sofa at L.

At back, toward L., is the front door. A rifle is leaning against wall by door. There is another door in R. wall. Toward R. at the back is a ladder fixed against wall leading up through an opening to the attic.

It is late in the evening, a year or so after Scene 2. A storm is raging outside.

BOWLING is reading aloud from a sort of pamphlet. His comfortable wife, NANCY, is listening and sewing.

BOWLING. (*Reads.*) "And how much more interesting did the spectacle become when, starting into full life and animation, as a simultaneous call for 'Pickwick' burst from his followers, that illustrious man slowly mounted into the Windsor chair, on which he had been previously seated, and addressed the club he himself had founded." (BOWLING chuckles.)

(NANCY laughs.)

NANCY. He sounds precisely like you, Bowling. (*There is a knock at door. Nervous.*) That's not Abe's knock. Who can it be?

BOWL. (*Rising.*) We don't know yet, my dear.

NAN. It's a strange hour for anyone to be calling.

(BOWLING unbolts and opens door. It is JOSH SPEED.)

BOWL. Why—Josh Speed!

JOSH. Good evening, Bowling.

BOWL. We haven't seen you in a coon's age.

NAN. Good evening, Mr. Speed.

JOSH. (*Crosses down to NANCY.*) Good evening, Mrs. Green. And I beg you to forgive me for this untimely intrusion.

NAN. We're delighted to see you, Mr. Speed. Take your wrap off.

JOSH. (*Crosses up to door. Hangs up hat and coat.*) Thank you. I've just come down from Springfield. I heard Abe Lincoln was in town and I was told I might find him here.

BOWL. He's been sleeping here, up in the attic.

NAN. But he's out now at the Rutledge Farm, tending poor little Ann.

JOSH. Miss Rutledge? What's the matter with her?

NAN. She's been taken with the brain sickness. It's the most shocking thing. People have been dying from it right and left.

BOWL. But Ann's young. She'll pull through, all right. Sit down, Josh.

JOSH. (*Crossing to sofa L.*) Thank you. (*He sits.*)

(BOWLING goes to bookcase U. R., fills and lights pipe.)

NAN. I suppose you know that Abe came rushing down from Vandalia the moment he heard she was taken. He's deeply in love with her.

BOWL. Now, Nancy—don't exaggerate.

(JOSH is listening to all this intently.)

JOSH. So Abe is in love. I wondered what has been the matter with him lately.

NAN. Why, it's written all over his poor, homely face.

JOSH. The last time I saw him he seemed pretty moody. But when I asked him what was wrong, he said it was his liver.

BOWL. (*Laughing.*) That sounds more likely. Has he been getting on well in the assembly?

JOSH. No, he has just been sitting there—drawing his three dollars a day—and taking no apparent interest in the proceedings. Do you fancy that Miss Rutledge cares anything for him?

NAN. Indeed she does! She broke her promise to that Mr. McNeil because of her feelings for Abe.

JOSH. Has he any notion of marrying her?

NAN. It's the only notion of his life right now. And the sooner they are married, the better for both of them.

BOWL. Better for her, perhaps—but worse for him.

NAN. And why? The Rutledges are fine people, superior in every way to those riffraff Hankses and Lincolns that are Abe's family.

BOWL. I think you feel as I do, Josh—Abe has his own way to go, and sweet and pretty as Ann undoubtedly is, she'd only be a hindrance to him.

JOSH. I guess it wouldn't matter much if she could give him a little of the happiness he's never had.

NAN. That's just it! I think as much of Abe as you do, Bowling. But we can't deny that he's a poor man, and he's failed in trade, and he's been in the legislature for a year without accomplishing a blessed thing.

BOWL. He could go to Springfield and set up a law practice and make a good thing of it. Ninian Edwards would help him to get started. And he'd soon forget little Ann. He has just happened to fasten on her his own romantic ideal of what's beautiful and unattainable. Let him ever attain her, and she'd break his heart.

NAN. (*Comes back to L. of table. Sits.*) Do you agree with Bowling on that, Mr. Speed?

JOSH. I can't say, Mrs. Green. I've abandoned the attempt to pre-

dict anything about Abe Lincoln. The first time I ever saw him was when he was piloting that steamboat, the "Talisman." You remember how she ran into trouble at the dam. I had a valuable load of goods aboard for my father's store, and I was sure that steamboat, goods and all were a total loss. But Abe got her through. It was a great piece of work. I thought, "Here is a reliable man." So I cultivated his acquaintance, believing in my conceit that I could help him to fame and fortune. I soon learned differently. I found out that he has plenty of strength and courage in his body—but in his mind he's a hopeless hypochondriac. He can split rails, push a plough, crack jokes all day—and then sit up all night reading "Hamlet" and brooding over his own resemblance to that melancholy prince. Maybe he's a great philosopher—maybe he's a great fool. I don't know what he is.

BOWL. (*Laughs.*) Well—if only Ann had sense enough to see all the things you saw, Josh, she'd be so terrified of him she'd run all the way back to York State and find McNeil. At least, *he's* not complicated.

NAN. (*With deeper emotion.*) You're talking about Abe Lincoln as if he were some problem that you found in a book, and it's interesting to try to figure it out. Well, maybe he is a problem, but he's also a man, and a miserable one. And what do you do for his misery? You laugh at his comical jokes and you vote for him on election day and give him board and lodging when he needs it. (*Crosses to bookcase.*) But all that doesn't give a scrap of satisfaction to Abe's soul—and never will. Because the one thing he needs is a woman with the will to face life for him.

BOWL. You think he's afraid to face it himself?

NAN. He is! He listens too much to the whispers that he heard in the forest where he grew up, and where he always goes now when he wants to be alone. They're the whispers of the women behind him—his dead mother—and *her* mother, who was no better than she should be. He's got that awful fear on him, of not knowing what the whispers mean, or where they're directing him. And none of your back-slapping will knock that fear out of him. Only a woman can free him—a woman who loves him truly, and believes in him. . . .

(*There is a knock on the door.*)

BOWL. That's Abe now. (*BOWLING gets up and opens it. ABE comes in U. L. C., bareheaded, wet by the storm. He now wears a fairly*

respectable dark suit of clothes. He looks considerably older and grimmer.) Why, hello, Abe! We've been sitting up waiting for you. Come on in.

(BOWLING shuts and bolts door behind him and crosses up by stove.)

NAN. We were reading "The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club" when Mr. Speed came in.

ABE. Hello, Josh. Glad to see you.

JOSH. Hello, Abe.

(Then ABE turns to NANCY.)

ABE. Nancy . . .

NAN. Yes, Abe?

ABE. She's dead.

BOWL. Ann? She's dead?

ABE. Yes. Tonight the fever suddenly got worse. They couldn't seem to do anything for it.

(NANCY goes to ABE and takes his hand.)

NAN. Oh, Abe—I'm so sorry. (Turns and crosses D. R., facing R.) She was such a dear little girl. Everyone who knew her will join in mourning for her.

ABE. I know they will. But it won't do any good. She's dead.

BOWL. Sit down, Abe, and rest yourself.

ABE. No—I'm not fit company for anybody. I'd better be going. (He goes to door and unbolts it. NANCY turns sharply.)

JOSH. (Stopping him.) No you don't, Abe. You'll stay right here.

BOWL. You better do what Josh tells you.

NAN. (Crosses to chair C.) Come here, Abe. Please sit down. (ABE looks from one to the other, then obediently goes to chair L. of table and sits.) Your bed is ready for you upstairs when you want it.

ABE. (Dully.) You're the best friends I've got in the world, and it seems a pretty poor way to reward you for all that you've given me, to come here now and inflict you with a corpse.

BOWL. This is your home, Abe. This is where you're loved.

ABE. I know that. And I love you, Bowling and Nancy. But I loved her more than everything else that I've ever known.

NAN. I know you did, Abe. (To chair R.) I know it.

ABE. I used to think it was better to be alone. I was always most contented when I was alone. I had queer notions that if you got too close to people you could see the truth about them, that behind the surface they're all insane, and they could see the same in you. And then—when I saw her, I knew there could be beauty and purity in people—like the purity you sometimes see in the sky at night. When I took hold of her hand, and held it, all fear, all doubt, went out of me. I believed in God. I'd have been glad to work for her until I die, to get for her everything out of life that she wanted. If she thought I could do it, then I could. That was my belief. . . . And then I had to stand there, as helpless as a twig in a whirlpool; I had to stand there and watch her die. And her father and mother were there, too, praying to God for her soul. The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away, blessed be the name of the Lord! That's what they kept on saying. But I couldn't pray with them. I couldn't give any devotion to One who has the power of death, and uses it. (*He has stood up.*) I'm making a poor exhibition of myself—and I'm sorry—but—I can't stand it. I can't live with myself any longer. I've got to die and be with her again, or I'll go crazy! (*He goes to door and opens it and stands looking out.*) I can't bear to think of her out there alone!

(NANCY looks at BOWLING with frantic appeal. He goes to ABE, who is standing in doorway, looking out.)

BOWL. (*Going to ABE. With great tenderness.*) Abe . . . I want you to go upstairs and see if you can't get some sleep. . . . Please, Abe—as a special favor to Nancy and me.

ABE. (*After a moment.*) All right, Bowling. (*He turns and goes to ladder.*)

NAN. (*Takes candle from bookcase.*) Here's a light for you, dear Abe. (*She hands him the candle.*)

ABE. Thank you, Nancy. . . . Good night. (*He goes up ladder into the attic. They all look up after him.*)

NAN. (*Tearful.*) Poor lonely soul.

(BOWLING cautions her to be quiet.)

JOSH. (*Putting on his coat.*) Keep him here with you, Mrs. Green. Don't let him out of your sight.

BOWL. We won't, Josh.

JOSH. Good night. (*Goes and closes door.*)

BOWL. Good night, Josh. (*He bolts door, then comes down to table*

and picks up lamp. NANCY looks up once more, then goes out R. BOWLING blows out lamp and follows her out. He closes door behind him, so that the only light on stage is the beam from the attic.)

CURTAIN—END OF ACT I

ACT II

SCENE 4: *Law office of Stuart and Lincoln on the second floor of the Court House in Springfield, Ill. A sunny summer's afternoon, some five years after the preceding scene.*

The room is small, with two windows and one door, up stage, which leads to hall and staircase.

At back is a table and chair, at L. an old desk, littered with papers. At R. is a ramshackle bed, with a buffalo robe thrown over it. Below the windows are some rough shelves, sagging with law books. There is an old wood stove.

On wall above desk is hung an American flag, with 26 stars. Between the windows is an election poster, for Harrison and Tyler, with a list of electors, the last of whom is Ab'm Lincoln, of Sangamon.

BILLY HERNDON is working at the table. He is young, slight, serious-minded, smouldering. He looks up as ABE comes in. ABE wears a battered plug hat, a light alpaca coat, and carries an ancient threadbare carpet-bag. He is evidently not in a talkative mood. His boots are caked with mud.

He leaves office door open, and lettered on it we see the number 4, and the firm's name—Stuart & Lincoln, Attorneys & Counsellors at Law. ABE goes directly down to desk.

BILLY. How de do, Mr. Lincoln. Glad to see you back.

ABE. (Sits.) Good day, Billy. (He sets down carpet-bag, takes off his hat, removes from it various papers, puts hat on the rack and tosses the papers on desk.)

BILLY. How was it on the circuit, Mr. Lincoln?

ABE. About as usual.

BILLY. Have you been keeping in good health?

ABE. Not particularly. But Doc Henry dosed me enough to keep me going. (He starts looking at letters and papers that have ac-

cumulated during his absence. He takes little interest in them, pigeonholing some letters unopened.)

BILLY. Did you have occasion to make any political speeches?

ABE. Oh—they got me up on the stump a couple of times. Ran into Stephen Douglas—he was out campaigning, of course—and we had some argument in public.

BILLY. (*Greatly interested. Rises and crosses to ABE.*) That's good! What issues did you and Mr. Douglas discuss?

ABE. Now—don't get excited, Billy. We weren't taking it serious. There was no blood shed. . . . What's the news here?

BILLY. Judge Stuart wrote that he arrived safely in Washington and the campaign there is getting almost as hot as the weather. Mrs. Fraim stopped in to say she couldn't possibly pay your fee for a while.

ABE. I should hope not. I ought to be paying her, seeing as I defended her poor husband and he hanged.

BILLY. (*Handing him an envelope.*) This was left here by hand, and I promised to call it especially to your attention. It's from the Elijah P. Lovejoy League of Freemen. They want you to speak at an Abolitionist rally next Thursday evening. It'll be a very important affair.

ABE. (*Turns to BILLY. Reflectively.*) It's funny, Billy—I was thinking about Lovejoy the other day—trying to figure what it is in a man that makes him glad to be a martyr. I was on the boat coming from Quincy to Alton, and there was a gentleman on board with twelve Negroes. He was shipping them down to Vicksburg for sale—had 'em chained six and six together. Each of them had a small iron clevis around his wrist, and this was chained to the main chain, so that those Negroes were strung together precisely like fish on a trotline. I gathered they were being separated forever from their homes—mothers, fathers, wives, children—whatever families the poor creatures had got—going to be whipped into perpetual slavery, and no questions asked. It was quite a shocking sight.

BILLY. (*Excited.*) Then you will give a speech at the Lovejoy rally?

ABE. (*Wearily.*) I doubt it. That Freemen's League is a pack of hell-roaring fanatics. (*BILLY turns and crosses back to R. of table.*) Talk reason to them and they scorn you for being a mealy-mouth. (*ABE has opened a newspaper. He starts to read it. BILLY looks at him with resentful disappointment, but he knows too well that*

any argument would be futile. He resumes his work.) Let 'em make their own noise.

(After a moment BOWLING GREEN comes in, followed by JOSH SPEED.)

BILLY. Mr. Lincoln, I'd like to . . .

BOWL. Are we interrupting the majesty of the law?

ABE. Bowling! (Rises and crosses to BOWLING. Shakes hand.) How are you, Bowling?

BOWL. Tolerably well, Abe—and glad to see you.

ABE. Glad to see you.—This is Billy Herndon—Squire Green, of New Salem. Hello, Josh.

JOSH. Hello, Abe.

BILLY. I'm proud to know you, sir. Mr. Lincoln speaks of you constantly.

BOWL. Thank you, Mr. Herndon. Are you a lawyer, too?

BILLY. (Seriously.) I hope to be, sir. I'm serving here as a clerk in Judge Stuart's absence.

BOWL. So now you're teaching others, Abe?

ABE. Just providing a bad example.

BOWL. I can believe it. Look at the mess on that desk. Shameful!

ABE. Give me another year of law practice and I'll need a warehouse for the overflow. . . . But—sit yourself down, Bowling, and tell me what brings you to Springfield?

BOWL. (Sits above table.) I've been up to Lake Michigan fishing—came in today on the steam-cars.—Scared me out of a year's growth—but how are you doing, Abe? Josh says you're still broke, but you're a great social success.

ABE. True—on both counts. I'm greatly in demand at all the more elegant functions. You remember Ninian Edwards?

BOWL. Of course.

ABE. Well, sir, I'm a guest at his mansion regularly. He's got a house so big you could race horses in the parlor. And his wife is one of the Todd family from Kentucky. Very high-grade people. They spell their name with two D's—which is pretty impressive when you consider that one was enough for God.

JOSH. Tell Bowling whom you met over in Rochester.

ABE. The President of the United States!

BOWL. You don't tell me so!

ABE. Do you see that hand? (He holds out his right hand, palm upward.)

BOWL. Yes—I see it.

ABE. It has shaken the hand of Martin Van Buren!

BOWL. Was the President properly respectful to you, Abe?

ABE. (*Crossing up to door, then down to table.*) Indeed he was! He said to me, “We’ve been hearing great things of you in Washington.” I found out later he’d said the same thing to every other cross-roads politician he’d met. (*He laughs.*) But Billy Herndon here is pretty disgusted with me for associating with the wrong kind of people. Billy’s a firebrand—a real, radical Abolitionist, and he can’t stand anybody who keeps his mouth shut and abides by the Constitution. If he had his way, the whole Union would be set on fire and we’d all be burned to a crisp. Eh, Billy?

BILLY. (*Grimly.*) Yes, Mr. Lincoln. And if you’ll permit me to say so, I think you’d be of more use to your fellowmen if you allowed some of the same incendiary impulses to come out in you.

ABE. You see, Bowling? He wants me to get down into the blood-soaked arena and grapple with all the lions of injustice and oppression.

BOWL. Mr. Herndon—my profound compliments.

BILLY. (*Rising.*) Thank you, sir. (*To ABE, taking his hat.*) I have the writ prepared in the Wilcox case. I’ll take it down to the Clerk of Court to be attested.

ABE. All right, Billy.

BILLY. (*Goes to door and turns.*) Squire Green, Mr. Lincoln regards you and Mr. Speed as the best friends he has on earth, and I should like to beg you, in his presence, for God’s sake drag him out of this stagnant pool in which he’s rapidly drowning himself. Good day, sir—good day, Mr. Speed. (*Goes out quickly.*)

JOSH. Good day, Billy. (*JOSH crosses down to desk and sits on it.*)

BOWL. That’s a bright young man, Abe. Seems to have a good grasp of things.

ABE. (*Looking after BILLY.*) He’s going downstairs to the Clerk’s office, but he took his hat. Which means that before he comes back to work, he’ll have paid a little visit to the Chenery House saloon.

BOWL. Does the boy drink?

ABE. Yes. He’s got great fires in him, but he’s putting ’em out fast. . . . Now—tell me about New Salem. (*He sits down on BILLY’s table.*)

BOWL. Practically nothing of it left.

ABE. How’s that blessed wife of yours?

BOWL. Nancy's busier than ever, and more than ever concerned about your innermost thoughts and yearnings. In fact she instructed me expressly to ask what on earth is the matter with you?

ABE. (*Laughs.*) You can tell her there's nothing the matter. I've been able to pay off my debts to the extent of some seven cents on the dollar, and I'm sound of skin and skeleton.

BOWL. But why don't we hear more from you and of you?

ABE. Josh can tell you—I've been busy.

BOWL. What at?

ABE. I'm a candidate.

JOSH. (*Points to poster over bed.*) Haven't you noticed his name? It's here—at the bottom of the list of electors on the Whig ticket.

ABE. Yes, sir—if old Tippecanoe wins next fall, I'll be a member of the Electoral College.

BOWL. The Electoral College. Is that the best you can do?

ABE. Yes—in the limited time at my disposal. I had a letter from Seth Gale—you remember him—used to live in New Salem and was always aimin' to move West. He's settled down in Maryland now—and has a wife and son. He says that back East they're powerful worried about the annexation of Texas.

BOWL. They have reason to be. It would probably mean extending slavery through all the territories from Kansas and Nebraska right out to Oregon and California. That would give the South absolute rule of the country—and God help the rest of us in the free states.

JOSH. It's an ugly situation, all right. It's got the seeds in it of nothing more nor less than civil war.

ABE. (*Crossing to bed and stretching out on it.*) Well, if so, it'll be the Abolitionists' own fault. They know where this trouble might lead, and yet they go right on agitating. They ought to be locked up for disturbing the peace, all of them.

BOWL. I thought you were opposed to slavery, Abe. Have you changed your mind about it?

ABE. No. I am opposed to slavery. But I'm even more opposed to going to war. And, on top of that, I know what you're getting at, both of you. (*He speaks to them with the utmost good nature.*) You're following Billy Herndon's lead—troubling your kind hearts with concerns about me and when am I going to amount to something? Is that it?

BOWL. Oh no, Abe. Far be it from me to interfere in your life.

JOSH. Or me, either. If we happen to feel that, so far, you've been a big disappointment to us, we'll surely keep it to ourselves.

ABE. (*Laughs. He has slid down from table and ambled over to window.*) I'm afraid you'll have to do what I've had to do—which is, learn to accept me for what I am. I'm no fighting man. I found that out when I went through the Black Hawk War, and was terrified that I might have to fire a shot at an Indian. Fortunately, the Indians felt the same way, so I never saw one of them. Now, I know plenty of men who like to fight; they're willing to kill, and not scared of being killed. All right. Let them attend to the battles that have to be fought.

BOWL. Peaceable men have sometimes been of service to their country.

ABE. They may have been peaceable when they started, but they didn't remain so long after they'd become mixed in the great brawl of politics. Suppose I ran for Congress, and got elected. (*Sits up.*) I'd be right in the thick of that ugly situation you were speaking of. One day I might have to cast my vote on the terrible issue of war or peace. It might be war with Mexico over Texas; or war with England over Oregon; or even war with our own people across the Ohio River. What attitude would I take in deciding which way to vote? "The liberal attitude," of course. And what is the liberal attitude? To go to war, for a tract of land, or a moral principle? Or to avoid war at all costs? No, sir. The place for me is in the Electoral College, where all I have to do is vote for the President whom everybody else elected four months previous.

BOWL. Well, Abe—you were always an artful dodger—and maybe you'll be able to go on to the end of your days (*NINIAN EDWARDS comes on. He is a little stouter and more prosperous. Stands L. and above BOWLING.*) avoiding the clutch of your own conscience.

ABE. Hello, Ninian.

JOSH. Hello, Ninian.

NIN. Hello. I saw Billy Herndon at the Chenery House and he said you were in. (*He sees BOWLING.*) Why—it's my good friend Squire Green. How de do, and welcome to Springfield.

BOWL. Thank you, Mr. Edwards.

(*They shake hands.*)

NIN. (*He turns to ABE.*) I just called in, Abe, to tell you you must dine with us. And, Squire, Mrs. Edwards would be honored to receive you, if your engagements will permit—and you, too, Josh.

JOSH. Delighted.

NIN. We're proudly exhibiting my sister-in-law, Miss Mary Todd, who has just come from Kentucky to grace our home. She's a very gay young lady—speaks French like a native, recites poetry at the drop of a hat, and knows the names and habits of all the flowers. I've asked Steve Douglas and some of the other eligibles to meet her, so you boys had better get in early.

BOWL. My compliments to Mrs. Edwards, but my own poor wife awaits me impatiently.

NIN. I appreciate your motives, Squire, and applaud them. You'll be along presently, Abe?

ABE. I wouldn't be surprised.

NIN. Good. You'll meet a delightful young lady. And I'd better warn you, she's going to survey the whole field of matrimonial prospects and select the one who promises the most. So you'd better be on your guard, Abe, unless you're prepared to lose your standing as a free man.

ABE. I thank you for the warning, Ninian.

NIN. Good-day to you, Squire. See you later, Josh. (*He goes out R. C.*)

ABE. There, Bowling—you see how things are with me. Hardly a day goes by but what I'm invited to meet some eager young female who has all the graces including an ability to speak the language of diplomacy.

BOWL. I'm sorry, Abe, that I shan't be able to hear you carrying on a flirtation in French. (*He gets his hat.*)

ABE. I'm not pretending with you, Bowling—or you, Josh. I couldn't fool you any better than I can fool myself. I know what you're thinking about me, and I think so too. Only I'm not so merciful in considering my own shortcomings, or so ready to forgive them as you are. (*Rises.*) But—you talk about civil war—there seems to be one going on inside me all the time. Both sides are right and both sides are wrong and equal in strength. I'd like to be able to rise superior to the struggle—but—it says in the Bible that a house divided against itself cannot stand, so I reckon there's not much hope. One of these days I'll just split asunder, and part company with myself—and it'll be a good riddance from

both points of view. However—come on. (*He takes his hat from desk. BOWLING rises and so does SPEED. ABE rises and goes to door.*) You've got to get back to Nancy, and Josh and I have got to make a good impression upon Miss Mary Todd, of Kentucky. (*He is waving them to door as lights fade out.*)

END OF SCENE 4

ACT II

SCENE 5: *Parlor of the Edwards house in Springfield. An evening in November, some six months after preceding scene.*

There is a fireplace at L., a heavily curtained bay window at back, and a door at L. leading into front hall.

At R. by fireplace are a small couch and an easy-chair. Another couch at L., and a table and chairs at back. There are family portraits on the walls. It is all moderately elegant.

NINIAN is standing before the fire, in conversation with ELIZABETH, his wife. She is high-bred, ladylike—excessively so. She is at the moment in a state of some agitation.

ELIZ. (*Sitting on couch L.*) I can not believe it! It is an outrageous reflection on my sister's good sense.

NIN. (*Standing by fire R.*) I'm not so sure of that. Mary has known Abe for several months, and she has had plenty of chance to observe him closely.

ELIZ. She has been entertained by him, as we all have. But she has been far more attentive to Mr. Webb and Stephen Douglas and many others who are distinctly eligible.

NIN. Isn't it remotely possible that she sees more in Abe than you do?

ELIZ. Nonsense! Mr. Lincoln's chief virtue is that he hides no part of his simple soul from anyone. He's a most amiable creature, to be sure; but as the husband of a high-bred, high-spirited young lady . . .

NIN. Quite so, Elizabeth. Mary is high-spirited! And she's abnormally ambitious. That is just why she set her cap for him.

(ELIZABETH looks at him sharply, then laughs.)

ELIZ. You're making fun of me, Ninian. You're deliberately provoking me into becoming excited about nothing.

NIN. (*Crosses to ELIZABETH.*) No, Elizabeth—I am merely trying to prepare you for a rude shock. You think Abe Lincoln would be overjoyed to capture an elegant, cultivated girl, daughter of the President of the Bank of Kentucky, descendant of a long line of English gentlemen. Well, you are mistaken.

(MARY TODD comes in. *She is twenty-two—short, pretty, remarkably sharp. She stops short in the doorway, and her suspecting eyes dart from ELIZABETH to NINIAN. He has sat on couch.*)

MARY. (U. C.) What were you two talking about?

NIN. (*Rises and turns to MARY.*) I was telling your sister about the new song the boys are singing:

“What is the great commotion, motion,
Our country through?
It is the ball a-rolling on
For Tippe canoe and Tyler, too—for Tippecanoe . . .”

MARY. (*With a rather grim smile.*) I compliment you for thinking quickly, Ninian. But you were talking about me. (*She looks at ELIZABETH, who quails a little before her sister's determination.*) Weren't you?

ELIZ. (*Crossing over C. to MARY.*) Yes, Mary, we were.

MARY. And quite seriously, I gather.

NIN. I'm afraid that our dear Elizabeth has become unduly alarmed. . . .

ELIZ. (*Snapping at him.*) Let me say what I have to say! (*She goes up to R. of MARY.*) Mary—you must tell me the truth. Are you—have you ever given one moment's serious thought to the possibility of marriage with Abraham Lincoln? (*ELIZABETH turns away—walks down R.*) I promise you, Mary, that to me such a notion is too far beyond the bounds of credibility to be . . .

MARY. But Ninian has railed the horrid subject, hasn't he? He has brought the evil scandal out into the open, and we must face it, fearlessly. Let us do so at once, by all means. I shall answer you, Elizabeth. I have given more than one moment's thought to the

possibility you mentioned—and I have decided that I shall be Mrs. Lincoln. (MARY goes to couch and sits.) I have examined, carefully, the qualifications of all the young gentlemen, and some of the old ones, in this neighborhood. Those of Mr. Lincoln seem to me superior to all others, and he is my choice.

ELIZ. (Crossing to U. R. C.) Do you expect me to congratulate you upon this amazing selection?

MARY. No! I ask for no congratulations, nor condolences, either.

ELIZ. Then I shall offer none. (Goes to chair R. and sits with her back to NINIAN and MARY.)

NIN. Forgive me for prying, Mary, but have you as yet communicated your decision to the gentleman himself?

MARY. (With a slight smile at NINIAN.) Not yet. But he is coming to call this evening, and he will ask humbly for my hand in marriage; and, after I have displayed the proper amount of surprise and confusion, I shall murmur, timidly, "Yes!"

ELIZ. (Half turns toward them. Pitiful.) You make a brave jest of it, Mary. But as for me, I am deeply and painfully shocked. I don't know what to say to you. But I urge you, I beg you, as your elder sister, responsible to our father and our dead mother for your welfare . . .

MARY. (With a certain tenderness.) I can assure you, Elizabeth—it is useless to beg or command. I have made up my mind.

NIN. I admire your courage, Mary, but I should like . . .

ELIZ. I think, Ninian, that this is a matter for discussion solely between my sister and myself.

(NINIAN starts to rise. MARY stops him.)

MARY. No! I want to hear what Ninian has to say. (To NINIAN.) What is it?

NIN. I only wondered if I might ask you another question.

MARY. (Calmly.) You may.

NIN. Understand, my dear—I'm not quarreling with you. My affection for Abe is eternal, but I'm curious to know what is it about him that makes you choose him for a husband?

MARY. (Betraying her first sign of uncertainty.) I should like to give you a plain, simple answer, Ninian. But I can not.

ELIZ. (Rising and crossing to MARY.) Of course you can not! You're rushing blindly into this. You have no conception of what it will mean to your future.

MARY. You're wrong about that, Elizabeth. This is not the result of

wild, tempestuous infatuation. I have not been swept off my feet. Mr. Lincoln is a Westerner, but that is his only point of resemblance to Young Lochinvar. I simply feel that of all the men I've ever known, he is the one whose life and destiny I want most to share.

ELIZ. (*Crossing R.*) Haven't you sense enough to know you could never be happy with him? His breeding—his background—his manner—his whole point of view . . . ?

MARY. (*Gravely.*) I could not be content with a "happy marriage" in the accepted sense of the word. I have no craving for comfort and security.

ELIZ. (*Turns.*) And have you a craving for the kind of life you would lead? A miserable cabin, without a servant, without a stitch of clothing that is fit for exhibition in decent society?

MARY. (*Raising her voice.*) I have not yet tried poverty, so I can not say how I should take to it. But I might well prefer it to anything I have previously known—so long as there is forever before me the chance for high adventure—so long as I can know that I am always going forward, with my husband, along a road that leads across the horizon. (*This last is said with a sort of mad intensity.*)

ELIZ. And how far do you think you will go with anyone like Abe Lincoln, who is lazy and shiftless and prefers to stop constantly along the way to tell jokes?

MARY. (*Rises—furious. Crosses to ELIZABETH.*) He will not stop, if I am strong enough to make him go on. And I am strong. I know what you expect of me. You want me to do precisely as you have done, and marry a man like Ninian; and I know many that are just like him. But with all due respect to my dear brother-in-law, I don't want that, and I won't have it. Never! You live in a house with a fence around it, presumably to prevent the common herd from gaining access to your sacred precincts, but really to prevent you yourselves from escaping from your own narrow lives. In Abraham Lincoln I see a man who has split rails for other men's fences, but who has never built one around himself.

ELIZ. (*Turns away and crosses D. R.*) What are you saying, Mary? You are talking with a degree of responsibility that is not far from sheer madness.

MARY. (*Scornfully. Follows her.*) I imagine it does seem like insanity to you. You married a man who was settled and established in the world, with a comfortable inheritance, and no prob-

lems to face. And you've never made a move to change your condition, or improve it. You consider it couldn't be improved. To you, all this represents perfection. But it doesn't to me. I want the chance to shape a new life, for myself, and for my husband. Is that irresponsibility?

MAID. (*Appears at L.*) Mr. Lincoln, ma'am.

ELIZ. He's here.

MARY. I shall see him. (*Crosses over to window L.*)

MAID. Will you step in, Mr. Lincoln?

ABE. (*Comes in wearing a new suit, his hair nearly neat.*) Good evening, Mrs. Edwards. Good evening, Miss Todd.

ELIZ. Good evening. (*Sits in chair R.*)

MARY. Good evening, Mr. Lincoln.

NIN. (*Rises, crosses C.*) Glad to see you, Abe. (*Going to ABE.*)

(*ABE sees that there is electricity in the atmosphere of this parlor. He tries hard to be affably casual. MARY has sat on couch.*)

ABE. (*Going down R.*) Ninian, good evening. I'm afraid I'm a little late in arriving, but I ran into an old friend of mine, wife of Jack Armstrong, the champion rowdy of New Salem. I believe you have some recollection of him, Ninian?

NIN. (*Sits on couch. Smiling.*) I most certainly have. What's he been up to now?

ABE. (*Crosses D. R.*) Oh, he's all right, but—Hannah, his wife, is in fearful trouble because her son Duff is up for murder and she wants me to defend him. I went over to the jail to interview the boy and he looks pretty tolerably guilty to me. But I used to give him lessons in the game of marbles while his mother foxed my pants for me. (*He turns to ELIZABETH.*) That means she sewed buckskin around the legs of my pants so I wouldn't tear 'em to shreds going through underbrush when I was surveying. Well—in view of old times, I felt I had to take the case and do what I can to obstruct the orderly processes of justice.

NIN. (*Laughs, with some relief.*) And the boy will be acquitted. I tell you, Abe, this country would be law-abiding peaceful if it weren't for you lawyers. But (*Rises.*) if you will excuse Elizabeth and me, we must hear the children's prayers and see them safely abed.

ABE. Why, I'd be glad to hear their prayers, too.

NIN. Oh, no! You'd only keep them up till all hours with your stories. Come along, Elizabeth.

(ELIZABETH doesn't want to go, but doesn't know what to do to prevent it.)

ABE. Kiss them good night for me.

(ELIZABETH rises.)

NIN. We'd better not tell them you're in the house, or they'll be furious.

ELIZ. (*Making one last attempt, crosses to MARY.*) Mary! Won't you come with us and say good night to the children?

NIN. (*Takes ELIZABETH by shoulders.*) No, my dear. Leave Mary here—to keep Abe entertained. (*He guides ELIZABETH out, following her.*)

MARY. (*With a little laugh.*) I don't blame Ninian for keeping you away from those children. They all adore you.

ABE. Well, I always seemed to get along well with children. Probably it's because they never want to take me seriously.

MARY. You understand them—that's the important thing. But, do sit down, Mr. Lincoln.

ABE. Thank you, I will. (*He crosses to chair by fire and sits opposite MARY. His back is to the audience.*)

(MARY looks at him with melting eyes. *The lights fade.*)

END OF SCENE 5

ACT II

SCENE 6: *Again the Law Office. It is afternoon of New Year's Day, a few weeks after the preceding scene.*

ABE is sitting, slumped in his chair, staring at his desk. He has his hat on, and a muffler is hanging about his neck, untied.

JOSH SPEED is half-sitting on table at L. He is reading a long letter, with most serious attention. At length he finishes it, refolds it very carefully, stares at floor.

ABE. Have you finished it, Josh?

JOSH. Yes.

ABE. Well—do you think it's all right?

JOSH. No, Abe, I don't. (*ABE turns and looks at him.*) I think the

sending of this letter would be a most grave mistake—and that is putting it mildly and charitably.

ABE. Have I stated the case too crudely? (*ABE is evidently in a serious state of distress, although he is making a tremendous effort to disguise it by speaking in what he intends to be a coldly impersonal tone. He is struggling mightily to hold himself back from the brink of nervous collapse.*)

JOSH. No—I have no quarrel with your choice of words. None whatever. If anything, the phraseology is too correct. But your method of doing it, Abe! It's brutal, it's heartless, it's so unworthy of you that I'm at a loss to understand how you ever thought you could do it this way.

ABE. I've done the same thing before with a woman to whom I seemed to have become attached. She approved of my action.

JOSH. This is a different woman. (*He walks over to window, then turns again toward ABE.*) You can not seem to accept the fact that women are human beings, too, as variable as we are. You act on the assumption that they're all the same one, and that one is a completely unearthly being of your own conception. This letter isn't written to Mary Todd, it's written to yourself. Every line of it is intended to provide salve for your own conscience.

ABE. (*Coldly, crosses to L. end of table.*) Do I understand that you will not deliver it for me?

JOSH. No, Abe, I shall not.

ABE. (*Angrily.*) Then someone else will!

JOSH. Yes. You could give it to the minister to hand to the bride when he arrives for the ceremony. But—I hope, Abe, you won't send it till you're feeling a little calmer in your mind. . . .

ABE. How can I ever be calm in my mind until this thing is settled and out of the way, once and for all? Have you got eyes in your head, Josh? Can't you see that I'm desperate?

JOSH. I can see that plainly, Abe. I think your situation is more desperate even than you imagine, and I believe you should have the benefit of some really intelligent medical advice.

ABE. The trouble with me isn't anything that a doctor can cure.

JOSH. There's a good man named Dr. Drake, who makes a specialty of treating people who get into a state of mind like yours, Abe. . . .

ABE. (*Utterly miserable.*) So that's how you've figured it! I've done what I've threatened to do many times before: I've gone crazy. Well—you know me better than most men, Josh, and per-

haps you're not far off right. I just feel that I've got to the end of my rope, and I must let go, and drop—and where I'll land I don't know, and whether I'll survive the fall—I don't know that either. . . . But—this I do know: I've got to get out of this thing—I can't go through with it—I've got to have my release!

(JOSH has turned to window. Suddenly he turns back, toward ABE.)

JOSH. (Crossing up L. by bed.) Ninian Edwards is coming up. Why not show this letter to him and ask for his opinion. . . .

ABE. (Interrupting, with desperation.) No, no! Don't say a word about this to him! Put that letter in your pocket. I can't bear to discuss this business with him now.

(JOSH puts letter in his pocket, sits on bed. He looks out.)

JOSH. Hello, Ninian.

NIN. Hello, Josh! Happy New Year! (NINIAN comes in. He wears a handsome fur-trimmed great-coat, and carries two silver-headed canes.) And Happy New Year, Abe—in fact, the happiest of your whole life! (Lays canes on table R.)

ABE. Thank you, Ninian. And Happy New Year to you.

NIN. (Opening his coat.) That didn't sound much as if you meant it. (He goes to stove to warm his hands.) However, you can be forgiven today, Abe. I suppose you're inclined to be just a wee bit nervous. (He chuckles and winks at JOSH.) God, but it's cold in here! Don't you ever light this stove?

ABE. The fire's all laid. Go ahead and light it, if you want.

NIN. (Striking match.) You certainly are in one of your less amiable moods today. (He lights stove.)

JOSH. Abe's been feeling a little under the weather.

NIN. (At stove.) So it seems. He looked to me as if he'd been to a funeral.

ABE. That's where I have been.

NIN. (Disbelieving, turns and crosses to R. of table.) What? A funeral on your wedding day?

JOSH. They buried Abe's oldest friend, Bowling Green, this morning.

NIN. (Shocked, sits R. of table.) Oh—I'm mighty sorry to hear that, Abe. And—I hope you'll forgive me for—not having known about it.

ABE. Of course, Ninian.

NIN. But I'm glad you were there, Abe, at the funeral. It must have been a great comfort to his family.

ABE. I wasn't any comfort to anyone. They asked me to deliver an oration, a eulogy of the deceased—and I tried—and I couldn't say a thing. Why do they expect you to strew a lot of flowery phrases over anything so horrible as a dead body? Do they think that Bowling Green's soul needs quotations to give it peace? All that mattered to me was that he was a good, just man—and I loved him—and he's dead.

NIN. Why didn't you say that, Abe?

ABE. I told you—they wanted an oration.

NIN. Well, Abe—I think Bowling himself would be the first to ask you to put your sadness aside in the prospect of your own happiness, and Mary's—and I'm only sorry that our old friend didn't live to see you two fine people married. (*He is making a gallant attempt to assume a more cheerily nuptial tone.*) I've made all the arrangements with the Reverend Dresser, and Elizabeth is preparing a bang-up dinner—so you can be sure the whole affair will be carried off handsomely and painlessly. . . . (*BILLY HERNDON comes in. He carries a bottle in his coat pocket, and is already more than a little drunk and sullen, but abnormally articulate.*) Ah, Billy—Happy New Year!

BILLY. The same to you, Mr. Edwards. (*He puts bottle down on table and goes up by stove and takes his coat off and warms his hands.*)

NIN. I brought you a wedding present, Abe. Thought you'd like to make a brave show when you first walk out with your bride. (*He picks up one of the canes and hands it proudly to ABE, who takes it and inspects it gravely.*) It came from the same place in Louisville where I bought mine.

ABE. It's very fine, Ninian. And I thank you. (*He turns and puts it on desk.*)

NIN. Well—I'll frankly confess that in getting it for you, I was influenced somewhat by consideration for Mary and her desire for keeping up appearances. And in that connection—I know you'll forgive me, Josh, and you, too, Billy, if I say something of a somewhat personal nature?

BILLY. (*Turns. Truculent.*) If you want me to leave you, I shall be glad to . . .

NIN. No—please, Billy—I merely want to speak a word or two as another of Abe's friends; it's my last chance before the ceremony.

Of course, the fact that the bride is my sister-in-law gives me a little added responsibility in wishing to promote the success of this marriage. (*He turns to ABE.*) And a success it will be . . . if only, Abe, you will bear in mind one thing: you must keep a tight rein on her ambition. My wife tells me that even as a child she had delusions of grandeur—she predicted to one and all that the man she would marry would be President of the United States. (*He turns to JOSH.*) You know how it is—every boy in the country plans some day to be president, and every little girl plans to marry him. (*Again to ABE.*) But Mary is one who hasn't entirely lost those youthful delusions. So I urge you to beware. Don't let her talk you into any gallant crusades or wild goose chases. Let her learn to be satisfied with the estate to which God hath brought her. With which I shall conclude my pre-nuptial sermon. (*He buttons his coat.*) I shall see you all at the house at five o'clock, and I want you to make sure that Abe is looking his prettiest. (*He goes out.*)

BILLY. (*Pouring himself drink, raises cup to ABE.*) Mr. Lincoln, I beg leave to drink to your health and happiness . . . and to that of the lady who will become your wife. (*ABE makes no response. BILLY drinks it down, then puts cup back on table. Huskily.*) You don't want to accept my toast because you think it wasn't sincere. And, I'll admit, I've made it plain that I've regretted the step you've taken. I thought that in this marriage you were lowering yourself—you were trading your honor for some exalted family connections. . . . I wish to apologize for so thinking. . . .

ABE. No apologies required, Billy.

BILLY. I doubt that Miss Todd and I will ever get along well together. But I'm now convinced that our aims are the same—particularly since I've heard warnings delivered by her brother-in-law. (*A note of scorn colors his allusion to NINIAN.*) If she really is ambitious for you—if she will never stop driving you, goading you—then I say, God bless her and give her strength! (*BILLY pours himself another drink, nearly emptying the large bottle.*)

(*ABE turns and looks at him.*)

ABE. Have you had all of that bottle today?

BILLY. This bottle? Yes—I have.

JOSH. And why not? It's New Year's Day!

BILLY. Thank you, Mr. Speed. Thank you for the defense. (*Cross-*

ing to ABE.) To the President of the United States, and Mrs. Lincoln! (*He drinks.*)

ABE. (*Grimly.*) I think we can do without any more toasts, Billy.

BILLY. Very well! That's the last one—until after the wedding. And then, no doubt, the Edwards will serve us with the costliest champagne. And, in case you're apprehensive, I shall be on my best behavior in that distinguished gathering!

ABE. There is not going to be a wedding. (*ABE rises.*) I have a letter I want you to deliver to Miss Todd.

BILLY. What letter? What is it?

ABE. Give it to him, Josh. (*JOSH takes letter out of his pocket, and puts it in stove and crosses down by windows. ABE jumps up.*) You have no right to do that! (*Crossing to c.*)

(*BILLY crosses down to lower side of desk.*)

JOSH. I know I haven't! But it's done. (*ABE is staring at JOSH.*) And don't look at me as if you were planning to break my neck. Of course you could do it, Abe—but you won't. (*JOSH turns to BILLY.*) In that letter Mr. Lincoln asked Miss Todd for her release. He told her that he had made a mistake in his previous protestations of affection for her, and so he couldn't go through with a marriage which could only lead to endless pain and misery for them both.

ABE. (*Deeply distressed.*) If that isn't the truth, what is? (*He leans on desk.*)

JOSH. I'm not disputing the truth of it. I'm only asking you to tell her so to her face, in the manner of a man.

ABE. It would be a more cruel way. It would hurt her more deeply. For I couldn't help blurting it *all* out—all the terrible things I didn't say in that letter. (*He is speaking with passion.*) I'd have to tell her that I have hatred for her infernal ambition—that I don't want to be ridden and driven, upward and onward through life, with her whip lashing me, and her spurs digging into me! If her poor soul craves importance in life, then let her marry Stephen Douglas. He's ambitious, too. I want only to be left alone! (*Sits L. end of table.*)

JOSH. Very well, then—tell her all that! It will be more gracious to admit that you're afraid of her, instead of letting her down flat with the statement that your ardor, such as it was, has cooled.

(*BILLY has been seething with a desire to get into this conversation. Now, with a momentary silence, he plunges.*)

BILLY. May I say something?

ABE. I doubt that you're in much of a condition to contribute . . .

JOSH. What is it, Billy?

BILLY. It's just this. Mr. Lincoln, you're not abandoning Miss Mary Todd. No! You're only using her as a living sacrifice, offering her up in the hope that you will thus gain forgiveness of the gods for your failure to do your own great duty!

ABE. Yes! My own great duty. Everyone feels called upon to remind me of it, but no one can tell me what it is.

BILLY. I can tell you! I can tell you what is the duty of every man who calls himself an American! It is to perpetuate those truths which were once held to be self-evident: that all men are created equal—that they are endowed with certain inalienable rights—that among these are the right to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness.

ABE. And are those rights denied to *me*?

BILLY. Could you ever enjoy them while your mind is full of the awful knowledge that two millions of your fellow beings in this country are slaves? Can you take any satisfaction from looking at that flag above your desk, when you know that ten of its stars represent states which are willing to destroy the Union rather than yield their property rights in the flesh and blood of those slaves? And what of all the states of the future? All the territories of the West—clear out to the Pacific Ocean? Will they be the homes of freemen? Are you answering that question to your own satisfaction? That's your flag, Mr. Lincoln, and you're proud of it. But what are you doing to save it from being ripped into shreds?

(ABE jumps to his feet and towers over BILLY.)

ABE. I'm minding my own buisness—that's what I'm doing! And there'd be no threat to the Union if others would do the same. And as to slavery, I'm sick and tired of this righteous talk about it. When you know more about law, you'll know that those property rights you mentioned are guaranteed by the constitution. And if the Union can't stand on the Constitution, then let it fall! (Crosses to above desk-chair.)

BILLY. (Turns to face ABE.) The hell with the Constitution! This is a matter of the rights of living men to freedom—and those came before the Constitution! When the law denies those rights, then the law is wrong, and it must be changed, if not by moral protest, then by force! There's no course of action that isn't justified in

the defense of freedom! And don't dare to tell me that anyone in the world knows that better than you do, Mr. Lincoln. You, who honor the memory of Elijah Lovejoy and every other man who ever died for that very ideal!

ABE. (*Turning away from him.*) Yes—I honor them—and envy them—because they could believe that their ideals are worth dying for. (*He turns to JOSH and speaks with infinite weariness, crossing to C.*) All right, Josh, I'll go up now and talk to Mary—and then I'm going away. . . . (*Going.*)

JOSH. Where, Abe?

ABE. I don't know. (*He goes out.*)

(*BILLY rushes to door and shouts after him.*)

BILLY. You're quitting, Mr. Lincoln. As surely as there's a God in Heaven, He knows that you're running away from your obligations to Him, and to your fellowmen, and your own immortal soul!

JOSH. (*Who is by other window.*) Leave him alone, Billy. He's a sick man.

BILLY. What can we do for him, Mr. Speed? What can we do?

JOSH. I don't know, Billy. (*He goes to window and looks out.*

BILLY *sits at table.*) He'll be in such a state of emotional upheaval he'll want to go away by himself for a long time. Just as he did after the death of poor little Ann Rutledge. He'll go out and wander on the prairies, aimlessly, trying to grope his way back into the wilderness from which he came. There's nothing we can do for him, Billy. He'll have to do it for himself.

BILLY. (*Fervently.*) May God be with him!

END OF SCENE 6

ACT II

SCENE 7: *On the prairie. It is a clear, cool, moonlit evening, nearly two years after the preceding scene.*

In the foreground is a campfire. Around it are packing cases, blanket rolls and one ancient trunk. In the background is a covered wagon, standing at an angle, so that the opening at the back of it is visible to the audience. SETH GALE is standing by the fire, holding his eight-

year-old son, JIMMY, in his arms. The boy is wrapped up in a blanket.

JIMMY. I don't want to be near the fire, Paw. I'm burning up. Won't you take the blanket off me, Paw?

SETH. No, son. You're better off if you keep yourself covered.

JIMMY. I want some water, Paw. Can't I have some water?

SETH. Yes! Keep quiet, Jimmy! Gobey's getting the water for you now. (*He looks off R., sees someone coming.*) Hello, Jack. I was afraid you'd got lost.

JACK. (*Coming in.*) I couldn't get lost anywheres around New Salem. How's the boy?

SETH. (*With a cautionary look at JACK.*) He—he's a little bit thirsty. Did you find Abe?

JACK. Yes—it took me some time because he'd wandered off—went out to the old cemetery across the river to visit Ann Rutledge's grave.

SETH. Is he coming here?

JACK. He said he'd better go get Doc Chandler who lives on the Winchester Road. He'll be along in a while. (*He comes up to JIMMY.*) How you feeling, Jimmy?

JIMMY. I'm thirsty.

(AGGIE appears, sees JACK.)

AGGIE. Oh, I'm glad you're back, Mr. Armstrong.

JACK. There'll be a doctor here soon, Mrs. Gale.

AGGIE. Thank God for that! Bring him into the wagon, Seth. I got a nice soft bed all ready for him.

SETH. You hear that, Jimmy? Your ma's fixed a place where you can rest comfortable.

(AGGIE retreats into wagon.)

JIMMY. When'll Gobey come back? I'm thirsty. When'll he bring the water?

SETH. Right away, son. You can trust Gobey to get your water. (*He hands JIMMY into the wagon.*)

JACK. He's worse, ain't he?

SETH. (*In a despairing tone.*) Yes. The fever's been raging something fierce since you left. It'll sure be a relief when Abe gets here. He can always do something to put confidence in you.

JACK. How long since you've seen Abe, Seth?

SETH. Haven't laid eyes on him since I left here—seven—eight years ago. We've corresponded some.

JACK. (*Sits behind fire to R.*) Well, you may be surprised when you see him. He's changed plenty since he went to Springfield. He climbed up pretty high in the world, but he appears to have slipped down lately. He ain't much like his old comical self.

SETH. Well, I guess we all got to change. (*Hearing GOBEY return, he rises and goes L.*) Aggie! (*GOBEY, a negro, has come in from L. carrying bucket of water. AGGIE appears at wagon flap.*) Here's Gobey with the water.

GOBEY. Yes, Miss Aggie. Here you are. (*Hands up pail to her.*)

AGGIE. Thanks, Gobey. (*Goes back into wagon.*)

GOBEY. How's Jimmy now, Mr. Seth?

SETH. About the same.

GOBEY. (*Shakes head.*) I'll get some more water for the cooking. (*Picks up kettle, goes off L.*)

JACK. How long you been on the road, Seth?

SETH. (*Crosses to L. C.*) More than three months. Had a terrible time in the Pennsylvania mountains. Fearful rains and every stream flooded. I can tell you there was more than one occasion when I wanted to turn back and give up the whole idea. (*He is looking to R.*) Say! Is that Abe coming now?

JACK. (*Rises and looks off R.*) Yep. That's him.

SETH. My God, look at him! Store clothes and a plug hat! Hello, Abe!

ABE. (*He comes on from R. and goes to R. of fire.*) Hello, Seth. (*They shake hands.*) I'm awful glad to see you again, Seth.

SETH. And me too, Abe.

ABE. It did my heart good when I heard you were on your way West. Where's your boy?

SETH. He's in there—in the wagon.

AGGIE. (*Appearing on wagon.*) Is that the doctor?

SETH. No, Aggie. This is the man I was telling you about I wanted so much to see. This is Mr. Abe Lincoln—my wife, Mrs. Gale.

ABE. (*Goes to her.*) Pleased to meet you, Mrs. Gale.

AGGIE. Pleased to meet you, Mr. Lincoln.

ABE. Doc Chandler wasn't home. They said he was expected over at the Boger farm at midnight. I'll go there then and fetch him.

SETH. It'll be a friendly act, Abe.

AGGIE. We'll be in your debt, Mr. Lincoln.

ABE. In the meantime, Mrs. Gale, I'd like to do whatever I can . . .

SETH. There's nothing to do, Abe. The boy's got the swamp fever, and we're just trying to keep him quiet.

AGGIE. (*Desperately.*) There's just one thing I would wish.—Is there any kind of a preacher around this God-forsaken place?

SETH. (*Worried.*) Preacher?

ABE. Do you know of any, Jack?

JACK. No. There ain't a preacher within twenty miles of New Salem now.

AGGIE. Well—I only thought if there was, we might get him here to say a prayer for Jimmy. (*She goes back into wagon.*)

(SETH looks after her with great alarm.)

SETH. She wants a preacher. That looks as if she'd given up, don't it?

JACK. It'd probably just comfort her.

ABE. Is your boy very sick, Seth?

SETH. Yes—he is.

JACK. Why don't you speak a prayer, Abe? You could always think of something to say.

ABE. I'm afraid I'm not much of a hand at praying. I couldn't think of a blessed thing that would be of any real help.

SETH. Never mind. It's just a—a religious idea of Aggie's. Sit down, Abe.

ABE. So you've got your dream at last, Seth. You're doing what you and I used to talk about—you're moving.

SETH. Yes, Abe. We got crowded out of Maryland. The city grew up right over our farm. So—we're headed for a place where there's more room. I wrote you, Abe—about four months back—to tell you we were starting out, and I'd like to meet up with you here. I thought it was just possible you might consider joining in this trip.

ABE. It took a long time for your letter to catch up with me, Seth. I've just been drifting—down around Indiana and Kentucky where I used to live. Do you aim to settle in Nebraska?

SETH. No, we're not going to stop there. We're going to Oregon.

ABE. Oregon?

JACK. Sure. That's where they're all heading for now.

SETH. We're making first for a place called Westport Landing—that's in Kansas right on the frontier—where they outfit the

wagon trains for the far West. You join up there with a lot of others who are like-minded, so you've got company when you're crossing the plains and the mountains.

ABE. It's staggering to think of the distance you're going. And you'll be taking the frontier along with you.

SETH. It may seem like a foolhardy thing to do, but we heard too many tales of the black earth out there, and the balance of rainfall and sunshine.

JACK. Why don't you go with them, Abe? That country out West is getting settled fast. Why, last week alone, I counted more than two hundred wagons went past here—people from all over—Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Vermont—all full of jubilation at the notion of getting land. By God, I'm going too, soon as I can get me a wagon. They'll need men like me to fight the Indians for 'em and they'll need men with brains, like you, Abe, to tell 'em how to keep the peace.

ABE. It's a temptation to go, I can't deny that.

JACK. Then what's stopping you from doing it? You said yourself you've just been drifting.

ABE. Maybe that's it, maybe I've been drifting too long. Is it just the three of you, Seth?

SETH. That's all. The three of us and Gobey, the nigger.

ABE. Is he your slave?

SETH. Gobey? Hell, no. (*Turns to him.*) He's a freeman! My father freed his father twenty years ago. (*Moves toward ABE.*) We've had to be mighty careful about Gobey. You see, where we come from, folks are pretty uncertain how they feel about the slave question, and lots of good free niggers get snaked over the line into Virginia and then sold down river before you know it. And when you try to go to court and assert their legal rights, you're beaten at every turn by the damned, dirty shyster lawyers. That's why we've been keeping well up in free territory on this trip.

ABE. (*To SETH.*) Do you think it will be free in Oregon?

SETH. Of course it will! It's got to —

ABE. Oh no it hasn't, Seth. Not with the politicians in Washington selling out the whole West piece by piece to the slave traders.

SETH. (*Vehemently.*) That territory has got to be free! If this country ain't strong enough to protect its citizens from slavery, then we'll cut loose from it and join with Canada. Or, better yet, we'll make a new country out there in the far West.

ABE. A new country?

SETH. Why not?

ABE. I was just thinking—old Mentor Graham once said to me that some day the United States might be divided up into many hostile countries, like Europe.

SETH. Well—let it be! Understand—I love this country and I'd fight for it. And I guess George Washington and the rest of them loved England and fought for it when they were young—but they didn't hesitate to cut loose when the government failed to play fair and square with 'em.

JACK. By God, if Andy Jackson was back in the White House, he'd run out them traitors with a horse-whip!

ABE. (*Grimly.*) It'd be a bad day for us Americans, Seth, if we lost you, and your wife, and your son.

SETH. My son!—Oh, I've been talking big, but it's empty talk. If he dies there won't be enough spirit left in us to push on any further. What's the use of working for a future when you know there won't be anybody growing up to enjoy it? Excuse me, Abe, but I'm feeling pretty scared.

ABE. (*Suddenly rises.*) You mustn't be scared, Seth. I know I'm a poor one to be telling you that—because I've been scared all my life. And seeing you now, and thinking of the big thing you've set out to do—well, it's made me feel pretty small. It's made me feel that I've got to do something, too, to keep you and your kind in the United States of America. You mustn't give up, Seth. Don't let anything beat you.—Don't you ever give up.

AGGIE. (*Comes out of wagon and runs to SETH, L.*) Seth!

SETH. What is it, Aggie?

AGGIE. He's worse, Seth. He's moaning in his sleep, and he's gasping for breath. (*Breaks down.*)

SETH. (*Takes her in his arms.*) Never mind, honey, never mind. When the doctor gets here, he'll fix him up in no time. It's all right, honey. He'll get well.

ABE. If you wish me to, Mrs. Gale, I'll try to speak a prayer.

JACK. (*Crosses to ABE.*) That's the way to talk, Abe.

SETH. We'd be grateful for anything you might say, Abe.

ABE. (*Takes off his hat and starts speaking.* GOBEY comes in from L.) Oh God, the Father of all living, I ask You to look with gentle mercy upon this little boy who is here, lying sick in this covered wagon. His people are traveling far to seek a new home in the wilderness, to do Your work, God, to make this earth a

good place for Your children to live in. They can see clearly where they're going, and they're not afraid to face all the perils that lie along the way. I humbly beg You not to take their child from them. Grant him the freedom of life. Do not condemn him to the imprisonment of death. Do not deny him his birthright. Let him know the sight of great plains and high mountains, of green valleys and wide rivers. For this little boy is an American, and these things belong to him, and he to them. Spare him, that he too may strive for the ideal for which his fathers have labored, so faithfully and for so long. Spare him and give him his father's strength—give us all strength, oh God, to do the work that is before us. I ask you this favor in the name of Your son, Jesus Christ, who died upon the Cross to set men free. Amen.

GOBEY. (*With fervor.*) Amen!

SETH and AGGIE. (*Murmuring.*) Amen!

(ABE puts his hat on.)

ABE. It must be getting near midnight. I'll go after the doctor.
(*He goes out.*)

SETH. Thank you, Abe.

AGGIE. Thank you—thank you, Mr. Lincoln.

GOBEY. God bless you, Mr. Lincoln!

(*The lights fade quickly.*)

END OF SCENE 7

ACT II

SCENE 8: *Medium slow curtain.*

Again the parlor of the Edwards' house a few days after preceding scene.

MARY is seated R., reading a book. Night.

After a moment the MAID enters L. at back.

MAID. Miss Mary, Mr. Lincoln is here.

MARY. Mr.—Lincoln! (*She sits still a moment in an effort to control her emotions, then sharply closes book, rises and goes to L. C.*)

MAID. Will you see him, Miss Mary?

MARY. Yes—in one moment. (*MAID goes off L. MARY turns, thinking, drops her book on sofa, then turns and moves over R.; at fireplace she stops and turns to face ABE as he enters. He comes downstage to her. She moves to him.*) I'm glad to see you again, Mr. Lincoln.

ABE. Thank you, Mary. You may well wonder why I have thrust myself on your mercy in this manner.

MARY. I'm sure you're always welcome in Ninian's house.

ABE. After my behavior at our last meeting here, I have not been welcome company for myself.

MARY. You've been through a severe illness, Abe. Joshua Speed has kept us informed of it. We've been greatly concerned.

ABE. It is most kind of you.

MARY. But you're restored to health now—you'll return to your work, and no doubt you'll be running for the assembly again—or perhaps you have larger plans——?

ABE. I have no plans, Mary. (*He seems to brace himself.*) But I wish to tell you that I am sorry for the things that I said on that unhappy occasion which was to have been our wedding day.

MARY. You need say nothing about that, Abe. Whatever happened then, it was my own fault.

ABE. (*Tortured by these coals of fire.*) Your fault? It was my miserable cowardice——

MARY. I was blinded by my own self-confidence! I—I loved you. (*For a moment her firm voice falters, but she immediately masters that tendency toward weakness.*) And I believed I could make you love me. I believed we might achieve a real communion of spirit, and the fire of my determination would burn in you. You would become a man and a leader of men! But you didn't wish that. (*She turns away, crosses L.*) I knew you had strength, but I did not know you would use it, all of it, to resist your own magnificent destiny.

ABE. It is true, Mary, you once had faith in me which I was far from deserving. But the time has come, at last, when I wish to strive to deserve it. (*MARY looks at him, sharply.*) When I behaved in that shameful manner toward you, I did so because I thought that our ways were separate and could never be otherwise. I've come to the conclusion that I was wrong. I believe that our destinies are together, for better or for worse, and I again presume to ask you to be my wife. I fully realize, Mary, that taking me back now would involve humiliation for you.

MARY. I am not afraid of humiliation, if I know it will be wiped out by ultimate triumph. But there can be no triumph unless you yourself are sure. What was it brought you to the change of heart and mind?

ABE. On the prairie I met an old friend of mine who was moving West, with his wife and child, in a covered wagon. He asked me to go with him, and I was strongly tempted to do so. But then I knew that was not my direction. The way I must go is the way you have always wanted me to go.

MARY. And you will promise that never again will you falter, or turn to run away?

ABE. I promise, Mary—if you will have me—I shall devote myself for the rest of my days to trying—to do what is right—as God gives me power to see what is right.

MARY. Then I will be your wife. I shall fight by your side—till death do us part. (*These words are spoken with an almost triumphant exaltation. She moves to him.*) Abe! I love you—oh, I love you. Whatever becomes of the two of us, I'll die loving you. (*She is sobbing wildly on his shoulder. Awkwardly he lifts his hands and takes hold of her in a loose embrace. He is staring down at the carpet over her shoulder.*)

CURTAIN—END OF ACT II

ACT III

SCENE 9: *A speaker's platform in an Illinois town. It is a summer evening in the year 1858.*

A light shines down on the speaker at front of platform.

At back of platform are three chairs. At R. sits JUDGE STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS; at L., ABE, who has his plug hat on and makes occasional notes on a piece of paper on his knee. The chair in middle is for NINIAN, acting as Moderator, who is now at front of platform.

NIN. We have now heard the leading arguments from the two candidates for the high office of United States Senator from Illinois—Judge Stephen A. Douglas and Mr. Abraham Lincoln. A series of debates between these two eminent citizens of Illinois has focused upon our State the attention of the entire nation, for here are being discussed the vital issues which now affect the lives of all Americans and the whole future history of our beloved country. According to the usual custom of debate, each of the candidates will now speak in rebuttal . . . Judge Douglas.

(NINIAN retires and sits, as DOUGLAS comes forward. He is a short but magnetic man, confident of his powers. He carries a few notes which he places on lectern and studies for a moment before he speaks.)

DOUG. My fellow citizens: My good friend Mr. Lincoln has addressed you with his usual artless sincerity, his pure, homely charm, his perennial native humor. He has even devoted a generously large portion of his address to most amiable remarks upon my fine qualities as a man, if not as a statesman. For which I express deepest gratitude. But—at the same time—I most earnestly beg you not to be deceived by his seeming innocence, his carefully cultivated spirit of good will. For in each of his little homilies lurk concealed weapons. Like Brutus, in Shakespeare's immortal tragedy, Mr. Lincoln is an honorable man. But, also like Brutus, he is an adept at the art of inserting daggers between an opponent's ribs, just when said opponent least expects it. Behold me, gentlemen—

I am covered with scars. And yet—somehow or other—I am still upright. Perhaps because I am supported by that sturdy prop called "Truth." Truth which, crushed to earth by the assassin's blades, doth rise again. Mr. Lincoln makes you laugh with his pungent anecdotes. Then he draws tears from your eyes with his dramatic pictures of the plight of the black slave labor in the South. Always he guides you skilfully to the threshold of truth, but then, as you are about to cross it, diverts your attention elsewhere. For one thing, he never, by any mischance, makes reference to the condition of labor here in the North! Oh, no! Perhaps New England is so far beyond the bounds of his parochial ken that he does not know that tens of thousands of working men and women in the textile industry are now on STRIKE! And why are they on strike? Because from early morning to dark of night—fourteen hours a day—those "free" citizens must toil at shattering looms in soulless factories and never see the sun; and then, when their fearful day's work at last comes to its exhausted end, these ragged and hungry laborers must trudge home to their foul abodes in tenements that are not fit habitations for rats. What kind of Liberty is this? And if Mr. Lincoln has not heard of conditions in Massachusetts, how has it escaped his attention that here in our own great State no wheels are now turning on the mighty railroad, the Illinois Central? Because its oppressed workers are also on STRIKE! Because they too demand a living wage! So it is throughout the North. Hungry men, marching through the streets in ragged order, promoting riots because they are not paid enough to keep the flesh upon the bones of their babies! What kind of Liberty is *this*? And what kind of equality? Mr. Lincoln harps constantly on this subject of equality. He repeats over and over the argument used by Lovejoy and other Abolitionists: to wit, that the Declaration of Independence having declared all men free and equal, by divine law, thus Negro equality is an inalienable right. Contrary to this absurd assumption stands the verdict of the Supreme Court, as it was clearly stated by Chief Justice Taney in the case of Dred Scott. The Negroes are established by this decision as an inferior race of beings, subjugated by the dominant race, enslaved and therefore *property*—like all other property! But Mr. Lincoln is inclined to dispute the constitutional authority of the Supreme Court. He has implied, if he did not say so outright, that the Dred Scott decision was a prejudiced one, which must be overruled by the voice of the people. Mr. Lincoln is a

lawyer, and I presume therefore that he knows that when he seeks to destroy public confidence in the integrity, the inviolability of the Supreme Court, he is preaching *revolution*! He is attempting to stir up odium and rebellion in this country against the constituted authorities; he is stimulating the passions of men to resort to violence and to mobs, instead of to the law. He is setting brother against brother! There can be but one consequence of such inflammatory persuasion—and that is *Civil War*! He asks me to state my opinion of the Dred Scott decision, and I answer him unequivocally by saying, “I take the decisions of the Supreme Court as the law of the land, and I intend to obey them as such!” Nor will I be swayed from that position by all the rantings of all the fanatics who preach “racial equality,” who ask us to vote, and eat, and sleep, and marry with Negroes! And I say further, Let each State mind its own business and leave its neighbors alone. If we will stand by that principle, then Mr. Lincoln will find that this great Republic can exist forever, divided into free and slave states. We can go on as we have done, increasing in wealth, in population, in power, until we shall be the admiration and the terror of the world! (*He glares at the audience, then turns, mopping his brow, and resumes his seat.*)

NIN. (*Rising.*) Mr. Abraham Lincoln.

(*ABE glances at his notes, takes his hat off, puts notes in it, then rises slowly and comes forward. He speaks quietly, reasonably. His words come from an emotion so profound that it needs no advertisement.*)

ABE. Judge Douglas has paid tribute to my skill with the dagger. I thank him for that, but I must also admit that he can do more with that weapon than I can. He can keep ten daggers flashing in the air at the same time. Fortunately he is so good at it that none of the knives ever falls and hurts anybody. He can condone slavery in the South and protests hotly against its extension to the North. He can crowd loyalty to the Union and defense of states' sovereignty of the South into the same breath. You have heard the Judge make allusion to those who advocate voting and eating and marrying and sleeping with Negroes. Whether he meant me specifically, I do not know. If he did, I can say that just because I do not want a colored woman for a slave I don't necessarily want her for a wife. I need not have her for either. I can just leave her alone. In some respects she is certainly not my equal, any more

than I am the Judge's equal in some respects. But in her natural right to eat the bread she earns with her own hands without asking leave of anyone else, she is my equal, and the equal of all others. And as to sleeping with Negroes—the Judge may be interested to know that the slave states have produced more than four hundred thousand mulattoes—and I don't think many of them are the children of "Abolitionists." That word Abolitionist brings to mind New England, which has also been mentioned. I can assure Judge Douglas that I have been there, and I have seen those cheerless brick prisons called factories and the workers trudging silently home through the darkness. In those factories cotton that was picked by black slaves is woven into cloth by white people who are separated from slavery by no more than fifty cents a day. As an American, I cannot be proud that such conditions exist. But also, as an American, I can ask, would any of those striking workers in the North elect to change places with the slaves in the South? Will they not rather say, "The remedy is in our hands!" And still as an American I can say, thank God we live under a system by which men have the *right* to strike! I am not preaching rebellion. This country, with its institutions, belongs to the people who inhabit it. Whenever they shall grow weary of the existing government, they can exercise their constitutional right of amending it, or their revolutionary right to dismember or overthrow it. If the founding fathers gave us anything, they gave us that. And I am not preaching disrespect for the Supreme Court. I am only saying that the decisions of mortal men are often influenced by unjudicial bias—and the Supreme Court is composed of mortal men, most of whom, it so happens, come from the privileged class in the South. There is an old saying that judges are just as honest as other men, and not more so; and in case some of you are wondering who said that, it was Thomas Jefferson. (*He has half turned to DOUGLAS.*) The purpose of the Dred Scott decision is to make property, and nothing but property, of the Negro in all states of the Union. It is the old issue of property rights versus human rights—an issue that will continue in this country when these poor tongues of Judge Douglas and myself shall long have been silent. It is the eternal struggle between two principles. The one is the common right of humanity, and the other the divine right of kings. It is the same spirit that says, "You toil and work and earn bread, and I'll eat it." Whether those words come from

the mouth of a king who bestrides his people and lives by the fruit of their labor, or from one race of men who seek to enslave another race, it is the same tyrannical principle. As a nation, we began by declaring, "All men are created equal." There was no mention of any exceptions to the rule in the Declaration of Independence. But we now practically read it, "All men are created equal except Negroes." If we accept this doctrine of race or class discrimination, what is to stop us from decreeing in the future that "All men are created equal except Negroes, foreigners, Catholics, Jews, or—just poor people?" That is the conclusion toward which the advocates of slavery are driving us. Many good citizens, North and South, agree with the Judge that we should accept that conclusion: "Don't stir up trouble;" "Let each State mind its own business." That's the safer course, for the time being. But—I advise you to watch out! When you have enslaved any of your fellow beings, dehumanized him, denied him all claim to the dignity of manhood, placed him among the beasts, among the damned, are you quite sure that the demon you have thus created will not turn and rend you? When you begin qualifying freedom, watch out for the consequences to *you*! And I am not preaching civil war. All I am trying to do—now, and as long as I live—is to state and restate the fundamental virtues of our democracy, which have made us great, and which can make us greater. I believe most seriously that the perpetuation of those virtues is now endangered, not only by the honest proponents of slavery, but even more by those who echo Judge Douglas in shouting "Leave it alone." This is the complacent policy of indifference to evil, and that policy I cannot but hate. I hate it because it deprives our Republic of its just influence in the world; enables the enemies of free institutions everywhere to taunt us as hypocrites; causes the real friends of freedom to doubt our sincerity; and especially because it forces so many good men among ourselves into an open war with the very fundamentals of civil liberty, denying the good faith of the Declaration of Independence and insisting that there is no right principle of action but self-interest. In his final words tonight, the Judge said that we can be "the terror of the world." I don't think we want to be that. I think we would prefer to be the encouragement of the world, the proof that man is at last worthy to be free. But—we shall provide no such encouragement, unless we can establish our ability as a nation to live and grow. And we shall surely do

neither if these states fail to remain *united*. There can be no distinction in the definitions of liberty as between one section and another, one class and another, one race and another. "A house divided against itself can not stand." This government can not endure permanently, half slave and half free. (*He turns and goes back to his seat.*)

(*The lights fade.*)

END OF SCENE 9

ACT III

SCENE 10: *Parlor of the Lincoln home in Springfield. Afternoon of a day in the spring of 1860. This is the same parlor as in Scenes 6 and 8.*

ABE is sitting on couch at R., with his seven-year-old son, TAD. Across from them is another son, WILLIE, aged nine. The eldest son, ROBERT, a young Harvard student of seventeen, is sitting by the window, importantly smoking a pipe and listening to the story ABE has been telling the children. JOSHUA SPEED is sitting at L.)

ABE. (*Sitting on sofa, TAD on his lap, WILLIE beside him.*) You must remember, Tad, the roads weren't much good then—mostly nothing more than trails, and it was hard to find my way in the darkness. . . .

WILL. Were you scared?

ABE. Yes—I was scared.

WILL. Of Indians?

ABE. No, there weren't any of them left around here. I was afraid I'd get lost, and the boy would die, and it would be all my fault. But finally I found the doctor. He was very tired, and wanted to go to bed, and he grumbled a lot, but I made him come along with me then and there.

WILL. Was the boy dead?

ABE. No. The doctor gave him a lot of medicine.

TAD. Did it taste bad, Pa?

ABE. I presume it did. But it worked. I never saw those nice people again, but I've heard from them every so often. That little boy

was your age, Willie, but now he's a grown man with a son as big as Tad. He lives on a great big farm, in a valley with a river that runs right down from the tops of the snow mountains. . . .

(MARY comes in from R.)

MARY. (To C.) Robert! You are smoking in my parlor!

ROB. (Wearily—rising.) Yes, Mother.

MARY. I have told you that I shall not tolerate tobacco smoke in my parlor or, indeed, in any part of my house, and I mean to . . .

ABE. Come, come, Mary—you must be respectful to a Harvard man. Take it out to the woodshed, Bob.

ROB. (Starts up.) Yes, Father.

MARY. And this will not happen again!

ROB. No, Mother. (He goes out L.)

ABE. I was telling the boys a story about some pioneers I knew once.

MARY. It's time for you children to make ready for your supper.

(The CHILDREN promptly get up to go.)

WILL. But what happened after that, Pa?

ABE. Nothing. Everybody lived happily ever after. Now run along.

(WILLIE and TAD run out. MARY is shaking the smoke out of the curtains.)

JOSH. Half-past four, Abe. Those men will be here any minute.

ABE. (Rising.) Good Lord!

MARY. What men?

ABE. Some men from the East. One of them's a political leader named Crimmin—and there's a Mr. Sturveson—he's a manufacturer—and . . .

MARY. (Impressed.) Henry D. Sturveson?

ABE. That's the one—and also the Reverend Dr. Barrick from Boston.

MARY. (Sharply.) What are they coming here for?

ABE. I don't precisely know—but I suspect that it's to see if I'm fit to be a candidate for President of the United States. (MARY is, for the moment, speechless.) I suppose they want to find out if we still live in a log cabin and keep pigs under the bed. . . .

MARY. (In a fury.) And you didn't tell me!

ABE. I'm sorry, Mary—the matter just slipped my . . .

MARY. (*Crossing C. to ABE.*) You forgot to tell me that we're having the most important guests who ever crossed the threshold of my house!

ABE. They're not guests. They're only here on business.

MARY. (*Bitterly, crosses down R. and turns.*) Yes! Rather important business, it seems to me. They want to see us as we *are*—crude, sloppy, vulgar Western barbarians, living in a house that reeks of foul tobacco smoke.

ABE. We can explain about having a son at Harvard.

MARY. If I'd only *known*! If you had only given me a little time to prepare for them. Why didn't you put on your best suit? And those filthy old boots!

ABE. Why, Mary, I clean forgot.

MARY. I declare, Abraham Lincoln, I believe you would have treated me with much more consideration if I had been your slave, instead of your wife! You have never, for one moment, stopped to think that perhaps I have some interests, some concerns, in the life we lead together.

ABE. I'll try to clean up my boots a little, Mary. (*He goes out, glad to escape from this painful scene.*)

(MARY looks after him. Her lip is quivering. She wants to avoid tears.)

MARY. (*Sits R. side of sofa. Bitterly.*) You've seen it all, Joshua Speed. Every bit of it—courtship, if you could call it that, change of heart, change back again, and marriage, eighteen years of it. And you probably think just as all the others do—that I'm a bitter, nagging woman, and I've tried to kill his spirit, and drag him down to my level. . . .

JOSH. (*Quietly, going to L. of sofa.*) No, Mary. I think no such thing. Remember—I know Abe, too.

MARY. There never could have been another man such as he is! I've read about many that have gone up in the world, and all of them seemed to have to fight to assert themselves every inch of the way, against the opposition of their enemies and the lack of understanding in their own friends. But he's never had any of that. He's never had an enemy, and every one of his friends has always been completely confident in him. Even before I met him, I was told that he had a glorious future, and after I'd known him a day I was sure of it myself. But he didn't believe it—or, if he did, secretly, he was so afraid of the prospect that

he did all in his power to avoid it. He had some poem in his mind, about a life of woe, along a rugged path, that leads to some future doom, and it has been an obsession with him. All these years I've tried and tried to stir him out of it, but all my efforts have been like so many puny waves, dashing against the Rock of Ages. And now opportunity, the greatest opportunity, is coming here, to him, right into his own house. And what can I do about it? He *must* take it! He *must* see that this is what he was meant for! But I can't persuade him of it! I'm tired—I'm tired to death! (*The tears now come.*) I thought I could help to shape him as I knew he should be, and I've succeeded in nothing—but in breaking myself. . . . (*She sobs bitterly.*)

(JOSH rises, goes close to her.)

JOSH. (*Tenderly. Sits beside her.*) I know, Mary. But there's no reason in heaven and earth for you to reproach yourself. Whatever becomes of Abe Lincoln is in the hands of a God who controls the destinies of all of us, including lunatics and saints.

(ABE comes back.)

ABE. I think they look all right now, Mary. (*He looks at MARY, who is now trying hard to control her emotion. He looks at JOSH.*)

MARY. (*Rises.*) You can receive the gentlemen in here. I'll try to prepare some refreshment for them in the dining room. (*She goes out.*)

(ABE looks after her, miserably, and sits down. A few moments of silence. At length ABE speaks, in an offhand manner.)

ABE. I presume these men are pretty influential.

JOSH. They'll have quite a say in the delegations of three states that may swing the nomination away from Seward.

ABE. Suppose, by some miracle, or fluke, they did nominate me; do you think I'd stand a chance of winning the election?

JOSH. An excellent chance, in my opinion. There'll be four candidates in the field, bumping each other, and opening up the track for a dark horse.

ABE. But the dark horse might run in the wrong direction.

JOSH. Yes—you can always do that, Abe. I know I wouldn't care to bet two cents on you.

ABE. (*Grinning.*) It seems funny to be comparing it to a horse-race, with an old spavined hack like me. But I've had some mighty

energetic jockeys—Mentor Graham, Bowling Green, Bill Herndon, you, and Mary—most of all, Mary.

JOSH. (*Looking at ABE.*) They don't count now, Abe. You threw 'em all, long ago. When you finally found yourself running against poor little Douglas you got the bit between your teeth and went like greased lightning. You'd do the same thing to him again, if you could only decide to get started, which you probably won't. . . . (*The doorbell jangles. JOSH gets up.*) I'll go see if I can help Mary. (*JOSH goes.*)

(*ABE goes disconsolately to a picture in which he can see dimly his reflection. He tries to straighten his cravat, but there's not much he can do with it. The door is opened by a MAID, and STURVESON, BARRICK and CRIMMIN come in. STURVESON is elderly, wealthy and blank. BARRICK is a soft Episcopalian dignitary. CRIMMIN is a shrewd, humorous fixer.*)

ABE. Come right in, gentlemen. Glad to see you again, Mr. Crimmin.

(*They shake hands.*)

CRIMMIN. How de do, Mr. Lincoln. This is Dr. Barrick of Boston, and Mr. Sturveson of Philadelphia.

DR. BARRICK. Mr. Lincoln.

STURVESON. I'm honored, Mr. Lincoln.

ABE. Thank you, sir. Pray sit down, gentlemen.

STURV. Thank you.

(*They sit.*)

CRIM. Will Mrs. Lincoln seriously object if I light a seegar?

ABE. Go right ahead, Mr. Crimmin. I regret that Mrs. Lincoln is not here to receive you, but she will join us presently.

DR. B. (*With great benignity.*) I am particularly anxious to meet Mrs. Lincoln for I believe, with Mr. Longfellow, that "as unto the bow the cord is, so unto the man is woman."

STURV. (*Very graciously.*) And we are here dealing with a bow that is stout indeed. (*ABE bows slightly in acknowledgment of the compliment.*) And one with a reputation for shooting straight. So you'll forgive us, Mr. Lincoln, for coming directly to the point.

ABE. Yes, sir. I understand that you wish to inspect the prairie politician in his native lair, and here I am.

STURV. It is no secret that we are desperately in need of a candi-

date—one who is sound, conservative, safe—and clever enough to skate over the thin ice of the forthcoming campaign. Your friends—and there's an increasingly large number of them throughout the country—believe that you are the man.

ABE. Well, Mr. Sturveson—I can tell you that when first I was considered for political office—that was in New Salem, twenty-five years ago—I assured my sponsors of my conservatism. I have subsequently proved it, by never progressing anywhere.

DR. B. Then you agree that you are the man we want?

ABE. I'm afraid I cannot go quite that far in self-esteem, Dr. Barrick, especially when you have available a statesman and gentleman as eminent as Mr. Seward who, I believe, is both ready and willing.

STURV. That's as may be. But please understand that this is not an inquisition. (*Both laugh.*) We merely wish to know you better, to gain a clearer idea of your theories on economics—religion—and national affairs in general. (*CRIMMIN nods, wisely.*) To begin with, in one of your memorable debates with Senator Douglas, your opponent indulged in some of his usual demagoguery about industrial conditions in the North, and you replied shrewdly that whereas the slaves in the South . . .

ABE. Yes, I remember the occasion. I replied that I was thankful that laborers in free states have the right to strike. But that wasn't shrewdness, Mr. Sturveson. It was just the truth.

STURV. It has gained for you substantial support from the laboring classes, which is all to the good. It has also caused a certain amount of alarm among businessmen, life myself.

ABE. I can not enlarge on the subject. It seems obvious to me that this nation was founded on the supposition that men have the right to protest, violently if need be, against authority that is unjust or oppressive. The Boston Tea Party was a kind of strike. So was the Revolution itself. So was Nicholas Biddle's attempt to organize the banks against the Jackson administration.

STURV. Which is all perfectly true—but—the days of anarchy are over. We face an unprecedented era of industrial expansion—mass production of every conceivable kind of goods—railroads and telegraph lines across the Continent—all promoted and developed by private enterprise. In this great work we must have a free hand, and a firm one, Mr. Lincoln. To put it bluntly, would you, if elected, place the interests of labor above those of capital?

ABE. I cannot answer that, bluntly, or any other way; because I can not tell what I should do, if elected.

STURV. But you must have inclinations toward one side or the other. . . .

ABE. All I can say is, if it came to a conflict between those two forces, I should attempt to consider them as equals.

DR. B. I applaud your purpose, Mr. Lincoln, in steadfastly proclaiming the rights of men to resist unjust authority. But I am most anxious to know whether you admit One Authority to whom devotion is unquestioned?

ABE. I presume you refer to the Almighty?

DR. B. I do.

ABE. I think there has never been any doubt of my submission to His will.

DR. B. I'm afraid there is a great deal of doubt as to your devotion to His church.

ABE. I realize that, Doctor. They say I'm an atheist, because I've always refused to become a church member.

DR. B. What have been the grounds of your refusal?

ABE. I have found no churches suitable for my own form of worship. I could not give assent without mental reservations to the long, complicated statements of Christian doctrine which characterize their Articles of Belief and Confessions of Faith. But I can promise you, Dr. Barrick—I shall gladly join any church at any time if its sole qualification for membership is obedience to the Savior's own statement of Law and Gospel: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind, and thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." . . . But—I beg you gentlemen to excuse me for a moment. I believe Mrs. Lincoln is preparing a slight collation, and I must see if I can help with it. . . .

CRIM. Certainly, Mr. Lincoln. (*ABE goes, closing door behind him. CRIMMIN looks at door, then turns to others.*) Well?

DR. B. The man is unquestionably an infidel. An idealist—in his curious primitive way——

STURV. And a radical!

CRIM. A radical? Forgive me, gentlemen, if I enjoy a quiet laugh at that.

STURV. Go ahead and enjoy yourself, Crimmin—but I did not like the way he evaded my direct question. I tell you, he's as unscrupulous a demagogue as Douglas. He's a rabble-rouser!

CRIM. Of course he is! As a dealer in humbug he puts Barnum himself to shame.

STURV. Quite possibly, but he isn't *safe*!

CRIM. Not safe, eh? And what do you mean by that?

STURV. Just what I say. A man who devotes himself so wholeheartedly to currying favor with the mob develops the mob mentality. He becomes a preacher of discontent, of mass unrest. . . .

CRIM. And what about Seward? If we put him up, he'll start right in demanding liberation of the slaves—and then there *will* be discontent and unrest! I ask you to believe me when I tell you that this Lincoln *is* safe—in economics and theology and everything else. After all, what is the essential qualification that we demand of the candidate of our party? It is simply this: that he be able to get himself elected! And there is the man who can do that.

STURV. (*Smiling.*) I should like to believe you!

DR. B. So say we all of us!

CRIM. Then just keep faith in the eternal stupidity of the voters, which is what he will appeal to. (*He points off stage.*) In that uncouth rail-splitter you may observe one of the smoothest, slickest politicians that ever hoodwinked a yokel mob! You complain that he evaded your questions. Of course he did, and did it perfectly! Ask him about the labor problem, and he replies, "I believe in democracy." Ask his views on religion, and he says, "Love thy neighbor as thyself." Now—you know you couldn't argue with that, either of you. I tell you, gentlemen, he's a vote-getter if I ever saw one. His very name is right—Abraham Lincoln! Honest Old Abe! He'll play the game with us now, and he'll go right on playing it when we get him into the White House. He'll do just what we tell him. . . .

DR. B. (*Cautioning him.*) Careful, Mr. Crimmin . . .

(ABE returns.)

ABE. If you gentlemen will step into the dining room, Mrs. Lincoln would be pleased to serve you with a cup of tea.

DR. B. (*Has risen.*) Thank you. (*He goes.*)

STURV. That is most gracious.

ABE. Or perhaps something stronger for those who prefer it. (STURVESON and DR. BARRICK go. CRIMMIN is looking for a place to throw his cigar.) Bring your seegar with you, Mr. Crimmin.

CRIM. Thank you—thank you! (He smiles at ABE, gives him a slap on the arm, and goes out, ABE following.)

(The lights fade.)

END OF SCENE 10

ACT III

SCENE 11: Lincoln campaign headquarters in the Illinois State House. The evening of Election Day, November 6th, 1860.

It is a large room with two tall windows opening out on to a wide balcony. There are doors upper R. and upper L. At L. is a table littered with newspapers and clippings. There are many chairs about, and a liberal supply of spittoons.

At the back, between the windows, is a huge chart of the thirty-three states, with their electoral votes, and a space opposite each side for the posting of bulletins. A short ladder gives access to Alabama and Arkansas at the top of the list.

On wall at L. is an American flag. At R. is a map of the United States, on which each state is marked with a red, white or blue flag.

ABE is at L., reading newspaper clippings. He wears his hat and has spectacles on. MRS. LINCOLN is sitting at R., her eyes darting nervously from ABE to chart, to map. She wears her bonnet, tippet and muff.

ROBERT LINCOLN is standing near her, studying map. JOSH SPEED and NINIAN EDWARDS are sitting in C., smoking cigars, and watching chart.

The door at R. is open, and through it the clatter of telegraph instruments can be heard. The window at L. is partly open, and we can hear band music from the square below, and frequent cheers from the assembled mob, who are watching the election returns flashed from a magic lantern on the State House balcony.

Every now and then a telegraph operator named JED comes in from R. and tacks a new bulletin up on chart.

Another man named PHIL is out on the balcony taking bulletins from JED.

ROBERT. Mr. Speed, what do those little flags mean, stuck into the map?

JOSH. (*Without looking up.*) Red means the State is sure for us. (*JED enters.*) White means doubtful. Blue means hopeless.

(*ABE tosses clipping he has been reading on table and picks up another. JED comes in and goes up to pin bulletins opposite Illinois, Maryland and New York.*)

NIN. (*Rising to look.*) Lincoln and Douglas neck and neck in Illinois.

JOSH. Maryland is going all for Breckenridge and Bell. Abe—you're nowhere in Maryland.

MARY. (*With intense anxiety.*) What of New York?

JED. Say, Phil—when you're not getting bulletins, keep that window closed. We can't hear ourselves think.

PHIL. All right. Only have to open 'er again. (*He closes window.*)

MARY. What does it say about New York?

(*JED goes.*)

NIN. Douglas a hundred and seventeen thousand—Lincoln a hundred and six thousand.

MARY. (*Desperately, to ABE.*) He's winning from you in New York, Abe.

JOSH. Not yet, Mary. These returns so far are mostly from the City, where Douglas is bound to run the strongest.

ABE. (*Interested in clipping.*) I see the New York Herald says I've got the soul of a Uriah Heep encased in the body of a baboon. (*He puts clipping aside and starts to read another.*)

NIN. (*Who has resumed his seat L. of table.*) You'd better change that flag on Illinois from red to white, Bob. It looks doubtful to me.

(*ROBERT, glad of something to do, changes flag, crosses to L. of JOSH.*)

MARY. What does it look like in Pennsylvania, Ninian?

NIN. There's nothing to worry about there, Mary. It's safe for Abe. In fact, you needn't worry at all.

MARY. Yes—you've been saying that over and over all evening:

There's no need to worry. But how can we help worrying when every new bulletin shows Douglas ahead?

JOSH. Nearly all of them show Abe gaining.

NIN. Just give them time to count all the votes in New York and you'll be on your way to the White House.

MARY. Oh—why don't they hurry with it! Why don't those returns come in?

ABE. (*Preoccupied.*) They'll come in—soon enough.

BILLY. (*Enters R. He has been doing a lot of drinking, but has hold of himself. Goes to R. C. by chair.*) That mob down there is sickening. They cheer every bulletin that's flashed on the wall, whether the news is good or bad. And they cheer every picture of every candidate, including George Washington, with the same fine ignorant enthusiasm.

JOSH. (*Up C.*) That's logical. They can't tell 'em apart.

BILLY. (*To ABE.*) There are a lot of journalists down there. They want to know what will be your first official action after you're elected.

NIN. What do you want us to tell them, Abe?

ABE. (*Still reading.*) Tell 'em I'm thinking of growing a beard.

JOSH. A beard?

NIN. Whatever put that idea into your mind?

ABE. (*Picking up another clipping.*) I had a letter the other day from some little girl. She said I ought to have whiskers, to give more dignity. And I'll need it—if elected.

(JED enters from L. with more bulletins—Connecticut and Missouri. They all huddle up C.)

MARY. What do they say now? Is there anything new from New York?

NIN. (*Has gone to study map and board.*) Connecticut—Abe far in the lead. That's eleven safe electoral votes, anyway. (JED has gone to window, knocked on it and PHIL opens it—loud cheers are heard.) Missouri—Douglas thirty-five thousand—Bell thirty-three—Breckenridge sixteen—Lincoln eight——

MARY. What are they cheering for?

BILLY. They don't know.

(MARY closes window and sounds die down.)

ABE. (*With another clipping.*) The Chicago Times says, "Lincoln breaks down. Lincoln's heart fails him! His legs fail him! His

tongue fails him! He fails all over! The people refuse to support him! They laugh at him! Douglas is champion of the people. Douglas skins the living dog." (*He tosses clipping aside.*)

MARY. (*Her voice trembling, moves down R. a bit.*) I can't stand it any longer!

ABE. (*Rising quickly.*) Yes, my dear—I think you'd better go home. I'll join you presently.

MARY. (*Hysterically.*) No. I won't go home! You only want to get rid of me. That's what you've wanted ever since the day we were married—and before that. Anything to get me out of your sight, because you hate me! And it's the same with all of you—all of his friends—you hate me—you wish I'd never come into his life!

JOSH. No, Mary —

(*ABE has stood up, quickly, at the first storm signal. He himself is in a fearful state of nervous tension—in no mood to treat MARY with patient indulgence. He looks sharply at NINIAN and at others.*)

ABE. Will you please step out for a moment?

NIN. Certainly, Abe. (*He and others go into telegraph office.*)

(*JOSH gestures to ROBERT to go with them. ROBERT casts a black look at MARY and goes. . . . ABE turns on MARY with strange savagery.*)

ABE. Damn you! Damn you for taking every opportunity you can to make a public fool of me—and yourself! It's bad enough, God knows, when you act like that in the privacy of our own home. But here—in front of people! You're not to do that again. Do you hear me? You're never to do that again!

(*MARY is so aghast at this outburst that her hysterical temper vanishes, giving way to blank terror.*)

MARY. (*In a faint, strained voice.*) Abe! You cursed at me. Do you realize what you did? You cursed at me.

(*ABE has the impulse to curse at her again, but with considerable effort he controls it.*)

ABE. (*In a strained voice.*) I lost my temper, Mary. And I'm sorry for it. But I still think you should go home rather than stay here and endure the strain of this—this Death Watch. (*He moves to behind table c.*)

MARY. (*Stares at him, uncomprehendingly, then.*) This is the night

I dreamed about when I was a child, when I was an excited young girl, and all the gay young gentlemen of Springfield were courting me and I fell in love with the least likely of them all. This is the night when I'm waiting to hear that my husband has become President of the United States. And even if he does—it's ruined for me. It's too late.

(ABE turns and looks at her. MARY opens door R. and goes out. ABE looks after her, anguished, then goes quickly to door L. and calls.)

ABE. Bob! (Steps back from door. ROBERT enters.) Go home with your mother.

ROB. Do I have to?

ABE. Yes! Hurry! Keep right with her till I get home.

(ROBERT goes out R. and ABE turns up to window at back R. C.)

PHIL. (Comes to window and opens it.) Do you think you're going to make it, Mr. Lincoln?

ABE. Oh—there's nothing to worry about.

(As window opens there is the murmur of the crowd and they begin to sing "Old Abe Lincoln Came Out of the Wilderness" through once. PHIL stands at window during song, at end of which there is a big cheer, and he closes window. NINIAN, BILLY, JOSH and JED enter from L., the latter to post bulletins. ABE turns from window. JED exits L. again after having distributed bulletins.)

NIN. (At R. C.) It looks like seventy-four electoral votes sure for you. Twenty-seven more probable. New York's will give you the election.

(BILLY is at board.)

JOSH. (Has been looking at ABE, now comes down L. to below table.) Abe, could I get you a cup of coffee?

ABE. No, thanks, Josh.

NIN. Getting nervous, Abe?

ABE. No. I'm just thinking what a blow it would be to Mrs. Lincoln if I should lose.

NIN. And what about me? I have ten thousand dollars bet on you.

BILLY. (Scornfully.) I'm afraid that the loss to the nation would be somewhat more serious than that.

JOSH. How would you feel, Abe?

ABE. I guess I'd feel the greatest sense of relief of my life.

(JED comes in with a news despatch.)

JED. Here's a news despatch. (*He hands it over and goes.*)

NIN. (*Reads.*) "Shortly after nine o'clock this evening, Mr. August Belmont stated that Stephen A. Douglas has piled up a majority of fifty thousand votes in New York City and carried the State."

BILLY. Mr. Belmont be damned!

(CRIMMIN has come in, smoking cigar, looking contented.)

CRIM. Good evening, Mr. Lincoln. Good evening, gentlemen—and how are you all feeling now?

NIN. Look at this, Crimmin. (*He hands despatch to CRIMMIN.*)

CRIM. (*Smiles.*) Well—August Belmont—he's going to fight to the last ditch, which is just what he's lying in now. I've been in Chicago and the outlook there is cloudless. In fact, Mr. Lincoln, I came down tonight to protect you from the office-seekers. (JED comes in with more bulletins to put on chart.) They're lining up downstairs already. On the way in I counted four Ministers to Great Britain and eleven Secretaries of State.

(JED to window.)

BILLY. (*At chart.*) New York! (JED to window.) Douglas a hundred and eighty-three thousand—Lincoln a hundred and eighty-one thousand!

(PHIL opens window.)

JOSH. Look out, Abe. You're catching up!

(*Window closed.*)

CRIM. The next bulletin from New York will show you winning. Mark my words, Mr. Lincoln, this election is all wrapped up tightly in a neat bundle, ready for delivery on your doorstep tonight. We've fought the good fight, and we've won!

ABE. Yes—we've fought the good fight—in the dirtiest campaign in the history of corrupt politics. And if I have won, then I must cheerfully pay my political debts. All those who helped to nominate and elect me must be paid off. I have been gambled all around, bought and sold a hundred times. And now I must fill all the dishonest pledges made in my name.

NIN. We realize all that, Abe—but the fact remains you're winning. Why, you're even beating the coalition in Rhode Island.

ABE. I've got to step out for a moment. (*He goes out at L.*)

NIN. (*Cheerfully.*) Poor Abe.

CRIM. You gentlemen have all been close friends of our candidate for a long time so perhaps you could answer a question that's been puzzling me considerably. Can I possibly be correct in supposing that he doesn't want to win?

JOSH. The answer is—yes.

CRIM. (*Looking toward L.*) Well—I can only say that, for me, this is all a refreshingly new experience.

BILLY. (*Belligerently, crosses to CRIMMIN.*) Would you want to become President of the United States at this time? Haven't you been reading the newspapers lately?

CRIM. Why, yes—I try to follow the events of the day. (*Sits R. of table C.*)

BILLY. Don't you realize that they've raised ten thousand volunteers in South Carolina? They're arming them. The Governor has issued a proclamation saying that if Mr. Lincoln is elected the State will secede tomorrow, and every other state south of the Mason-Dixon line will go with it. Can you see what that means? It means WAR. Civil war. And he'll have the whole terrible responsibility for it—a man who has never wanted anything in his life but to be let alone, in peace.

NIN. Calm down, Billy. Go get yourself another drink.

JED. (*Rushes in with news despatch which he gives to NINIAN.*) Mr. Edwards—here it is. (*He then goes to window and attracts PHIL'S attention. PHIL opens window and hands him a megaphone, as JED steps outside.*)

NIN. (*Reads.*) "At 10:30 tonight the New York Herald conceded that Mr. Lincoln has carried the State by a majority of at least twenty-five thousand and has won the election." He's won! He's won! Hurrah! (*Throws despatch in the air.*)

JED. (*Outside window—through megaphone as crowd is stilled for the announcement.*) Lincoln is elected! Honest Old Abe is our next President!

(*There is a terrifying cheer outside, the band plays "Illinois" and the characters on stage move toward ABE in congratulations, embracing and slapping each other on the back.*)

BILLY. God be praised! God be praised! (*Shakes ABE'S hand.*)

CRIM. I knew it! I never had a doubt of it!

NIN. You've carried New York, Abe! You've won!

BILLY. The New York Herald has admitted it!

NIN. Congratulations, Abe—congratulations!

BILLY. You're President, Mr. Lincoln—you're President of the United States!

CRIM. And my congratulations, Mr. President. This is a mighty achievement for all of us.

JED. (*Has closed window when cheers are at height, left megaphone outside, and come down to ABE.*) And me, too, Mr. President. (*Shakes ABE's hand and goes out L.*)

ABE. (*Solemnly.*) Thank you—thank you all very much. (*Moves over L.*)

JOSH. (*Comes to L. of table to shake hands with ABE.*) I congratulate you, Abe.

ABE. Thanks, Josh.

NIN. Listen to them, Abe. Listen to that crazy, howling mob down there.

CRIM. It's all for you, Mr. Lincoln.

NIN. (*Above table.*) Abe—come on—get out there and let them see you!

ABE. No. I don't want to go out there. (*He waves hand in refusal.*

BILLY closes window and sound dies down.) I guess I'll be going on home to tell Mary.

(*He is about to start for door R. when KAVANAUGH enters, followed by two others who stand either side of door. By this time all sound off stage has stopped. Move crowd to L. side of stage. There is a knock on door R. KAVANAUGH enters.*)

CRIM. (*Steps down.*) This is Captain Kavanaugh, Mr. Lincoln.

KAV. (*Salutes.*) I've been detailed to accompany you, Mr. Lincoln, in the event of your election.

ABE. I'm grateful, Captain. But I don't need you.

KAV. I'm afraid you must have us, Mr. Lincoln. I don't like to be alarming, but I guess you know as well as I do what threats have been made.

ABE. (*Wearily.*) Well—good night, Josh, Ninian—Mr. Crimmin—Billy. Thanks for your good wishes. (*He starts for door R. as they bid him good night. KAVANAUGH steps down before him.*)

KAV. With your permission, sir, I'll go first. (*He turns on his heel in an about-face and marches off R. ABE follows him off and the*

other two officers close in behind him as lights dim down and out.)

END OF SCENE 11

(When the music stops as the lights come up on the next scene a shrill train whistle is heard.)

ACT III

SCENE 12: *The yards of the railroad station at Springfield. February 11th, 1861.*

At R., at an angle toward audience, is the back of a railroad car. From behind this, off to upper L. runs a platform. Flags and bunting are draped above.

Along platform, on both sides of it, are soldiers, with rifles and bayonets fixed, and packs on their backs, standing at ease. Off to L. is a large crowd, whose excited murmur can be heard.

In foreground is KAVANAUGH. MILITIA CAPTAIN enters down ramp.

CAPTAIN. You men form up along this ramp. (*A BRAKEMAN with a lantern is inspecting the wheels of the car. KAVANAUGH is pacing up and down, chewing a dead cigar. He looks at his watch. CAPTAIN, to KAVANAUGH, with a trace of scorn.*) You seem nervous, Captain Kavanaugh.

KAV. Well—I am nervous. For three months I've been guarding the life of a man who doesn't give a damn what happens to him. I heard today that they're betting two to one in Richmond that he won't be alive to take the oath of office on March 4th.

CAPT. I'd like to take some of that money. The State Militia is competent to protect the person of our Commander-in-Chief.

KAV. I hope the U. S. Army is competent to help. But those Southerners are mighty good shots. And I strongly suggest that your men be commanded to keep watch through every window of every car, especially whenever the train stops—at a town, or a tank, or anywhere. And if any alarm is sounded, at any point along the line . . .

CAPT. (*A trifle haughty.*) There's no need to command my men to show courage in an emergency.

KAV. No slur was intended, Captain—but we must be prepared in advance for everything.

(*A brass band off to L. strikes up the campaign song, "Old Abe Lincoln Came Out of the Wilderness." The crowd starts to sing it, more and more voices taking it up. A CONDUCTOR comes out of car and looks at his watch. There is a commotion at L. as NINIAN and ELIZABETH EDWARDS and JOSH, BILLY and CRIMMIN come in and are stopped by the soldiers. The CAPTAIN goes forward bristling with importance.*)

CAPT. (*Going off L. up ramp.*) Stand back, there! Keep the crowd back there, you men!

NIN. I'm Mr. Lincoln's brother-in-law.

CAPT. What's your name?

KAV. I know him, Captain. That's Mr. and Mrs. Edwards, and Mr. Speed and Mr. Herndon with them. I know them all. You can let them through.

CAPT. Very well. You can pass.

(*They come down to R. CAPTAIN goes off at L. KAVANAUGH tips his hat.*)

CRIM. How is the President feeling today? Happy?

NIN. Just as gloomy as ever.

BILLY. (*Emotionally.*) He came down to the office, and when I asked him what I should do about the sign, "Lincoln and Herndon," he said, "Let it hang there. Let our clients understand that this election makes no difference to the firm. If I live, I'll be back some time, and then we'll go right on practicing just as if nothing had happened."

ELIZ. He's always saying that—"if I live." . . .

(*A tremendous cheer starts and swells off stage at L. CAPTAIN comes on, briskly.*)

NIN. Here's Abe!

CAPT. (*To KAVANAUGH.*) The President has arrived! (*To his men.*) Attention! Right shoulder—arms! (*CAPTAIN strides down platform and takes his position by car, looking off to L.*)

KAV. (*To NINIAN and the others.*) Would you mind stepping back there? We want to keep this space clear for the President's party.

(They move upstairs, at R. The cheering is now very loud.)

CAPT. Present—Arms! *(The SOLDIERS come to the Present. CAPTAIN salutes. Preceded by OGLEBY and DONNER, who are looking sharply to R. and L., ABE comes in from L., along platform. He will be fifty-two years old tomorrow. He wears a beard. Over his shoulder is his plaid shawl. In his R. hand, he carries his carpet-bag; his L. hand is leading TAD. Behind him are MARY, ROBERT and WILLIE, and the MAID. All, except MARY, are also carrying bags. She carries a bunch of flowers. When they come to car, ABE hands his bag up to CONDUCTOR, then lifts TAD up. MARY, ROBERT, WILLIE and the MAID get on board, while ABE steps over to talk to NINIAN and the others. During this, there is considerable commotion at L., as crowd tries to surge forward. CAPTAIN rushes forward.)* Keep 'em back! Keep 'em back, men!

(The SOLDIERS have broken their file on platform and are in line, facing crowd. KAVANAUGH, OGLEBY and DONNER are close to ABE. Each of them has his hand in his R. pocket, and is keeping a sharp lookout.)

KAV. *(At step of car, upper end.)* Better get on board, Mr. Lincoln.

(As ABE climbs up on car's back platform there is a great increase in the cheering when crowd sees him. They shout "SPEECH—SPEECH"—"Give us a speech, Abe," "Speech, Mr. President," "Hurray for Old Abe," etc. ABE turns to crowd, takes off his hat and waves a half-hearted gesture. Cheering dies down.)

NIN. Say something, Abe.

(For a moment ABE stands still, looking off L.)

ABE. My dear friends—I have to say good-bye to you. I am going now to Washington, with my new whiskers—of which I hope you approve.

(The crowd roars with laughter at that. More shouts of "Good Old Abe!" In its exuberant enthusiasm, crowd surges forward at and around SOLDIERS who shout, "Get back there," and "Stand back, you.")

CAPT. Keep 'em back, men.

ABE. It's all right, Captain—let them come on. They're all old friends of mine.

CAPT. All right, men. Fall back.

(SOLDIERS *fall back, forming ring about end of car, and crowd pushes its way in.* CAPTAIN goes to end of car. Silence falls.)

ABE. No one, not in my situation, can appreciate my feelings of sadness at this parting. To this place, and the kindness of you people, I owe everything. I have lived here for a quarter of a century, and passed from a young to an old man. Here my children have been born, and one is buried. I now leave, not knowing when or whether ever I may return. I am called upon to assume the Presidency at a time when eleven of our sovereign states have announced their intention to secede from the Union, when threats of Civil War increase in fierceness from day to day. It is a grave duty which I now face. In preparing for it I have tried to enquire what great principle or idea it is that has kept this Union so long together. And I now believe that it was not the mere matter of separation of the Colonies from the motherland, but that sentiment in the Declaration of Independence which gave liberty to the people of this country and hope to all the world. This sentiment was the fulfillment of an ancient dream, which men have held through all time, that they might one day shake off their chains and find freedom in the brotherhood of life. We gained democracy, and now there is a question whether it is fit to survive. Perhaps we have come to the dreadful day of awakening, and the dream is ended. If so, I am afraid it must be ended forever. I cannot believe that ever again will men have the opportunity we have had. Perhaps we should admit that and concede that our ideals of liberty and equality are decadent and doomed. I have heard of an Eastern monarch who once charged his wise men to invent him a sentence which would be true and appropriate in all times and situations. They presented him with the words, "And this too shall pass away." That is a comforting thought in times of affliction—"and this, too, shall pass away." And yet (*Suddenly speaks with quiet but urgent authority.*) let us believe that it is not true! Let us live to prove that we can cultivate the natural world that is about us, and the intellectual and moral world that is within us, so that we may secure an individual, social and political prosperity whose course shall be forward, and which, while the earth endures, shall not pass away. I commend you to the care of the Almighty, as I hope that in your prayers you will remember me. Good-bye, my friends and neighbors. (*He leans*

over rail of car platform to say good-bye to NINIAN, ELIZABETH, JOSH, BILLY, CRIMMIN, etc., shaking hands.)

(The crowd begins to sing "John Brown's Body." The cheering swells. CONDUCTOR looks at his watch and speaks to CAPTAIN, who gets on board. Crowd shouts, "Good-bye, Abe," "Good luck," "We trust you, Mr. Lincoln," etc. and we hear the refrain "Glory, Glory, Hallelujah." The crowd starts to sing increasing the number of voices with each word. KAVANAUGH tries to speak to ABE but cannot be heard. He touches ABE's arm, ABE turns to him quickly.)

KAV. Time to pull out, Mr. Lincoln, better get inside.

(The song increases in volume and the crowd surges toward the car. ABE gives one last wistful wave to the crowd as he enters the car. The SOLDIERS clamber on board the platform and on the last note of the song the lights are down and out. The curtain falls.)

CURTAIN

PROPERTY LIST

SCENE 1

1830 period.
Rude table.
2 chairs.
School books and papers.
Newspapers with speech which Abe reads.
British magazine with Keats' "On Death."

SCENE 2

1830 period.
2 tavern tables.
2 chairs.
1 keg stool.
3 stools.
Mug and bottle on bench back L.
Bench between door and fireplace.
Split-log bench in front of fireplace.
Pictures on wall, including Washington, John Adams, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, John Quincy Adams and Jackson.
Campaign picture of Henry Clay.
Liquor keg, off L. (Feargus).
Tray and dish-rag or towel (Ann).
Pipe and tobacco pouch (Ben).
Empty mugs on table, L.
Tray, off L., with bottle of whiskey, 3 glasses, pot of tea, cup and saucer (Ann to Bowling, Ninian and Trum).
Silver-headed cane and gold watch with fob (Ninian).
Bottle of rum, off L. (Ann to Ben).
Tray with 4 mugs of liquor, off L. (Ann to Jack and boys).
Mail bag or pouch with strap to go over shoulder (Abe) containing letters for Ann, 2 letters for Bowling, Cincinnati Journal (if this must be in a wrapper, it should be removable without tearing) for Trum, and letter for Seth.

(NOTES: Table L., dirty at opening, tobacco ash, spilled liquor, etc., for Ann to clean. Small blocks on downstage side of top of table, R., so Ninian's cane will not roll off.)

SCENE 3

1830 period.

Table and 2 chairs, R.

Sofa, L., against wall below door.

Bookcase, up R.

Bolt on door, up L. (this door must open off and up).

Clothes peg on door, up L.

Clothes rack, under ladder, dressed.

Stove, up L., with fire effect.

Lamp on table.

Candlestick with lighted candle in hurricane shade on bookcase
(moves off).

Place on or near door, up L., for knocking.

Musket, rifle or shotgun by door, up L. (This works again in
Scene 7.)

Pamphlet (Pickwick Papers, with excerpt typed) (Bowling).

Sewing materials (Nancy) including basket, needles, thread, etc.,
thimble, eyeglasses, patches and pants or overalls to be patched.

Pipe, tobacco and matches on bookcase (Bowling).

(NOTE: Pegs or blocks in wall by door up L., to prevent gun from
falling.)

SCENE 4

1840 period.

Table and 2 chairs, R.

Old desk in jog, L.

Swivel chair at desk.

Stove, up R.

Daybed, up L.

Clothes rack between door and stove, dressed.

Election poster, Harrison and Tyler, on wall.

List of electors on Whig ticket, the last of whom is Ab'm Lincoln of
Sangamon, on wall. (Also poster.)

Bookshelves with law books (built in).

American flag, 26 stars, on wall above desk.

Writing materials, inkwell, quill pen, blotting sand, etc., on table, R.
(Billy).

Sheets of foolscap, to open bookwise, one written and one blank, on
table, R., for writs (Billy).

Quantity of books, papers, etc. on desk.

Plant.

2 letters on desk, one from Lovejoy League and one from Seth Gale.

Matches in holder on wall by stove.

Carpet-bag (Abe).
3 page letter from Seth on desk L.
Herndon's coat and hat on scene.

SCENE 5

1840 period.
Sofa, L. c.
Chair, U. L.
Chair, R. c.
Fire in fireplace.
2 Console tables, R. L. c.
Curtains at doorways and window.
Whatnot up c.
Vase of flowers on console, L.
Rogers group on console, R.

SCENE 6

1840 period.
Letter (Josh).
2 Silver-headed canes (Ninian).
Fire glow in stove, to be lighted during scene (and flare up when letter is burned).
Large bottle of whiskey and glass by window, R. (Billy).
(NOTES: Make sure matches in wall holder. Blocks on table so canes won't roll.)

SCENE 7

1840 period.
Camp fire.
Boxes and barrels to sit on.
Blanket to wrap Jack.
Bucket of water, off L. (Gobey).
2 kettles at wagon (Gobey).
Cooking pot in wagon (Aggie).
Gun, L. of wagon (Seth). (Same as one used in Scene 3.)
(NOTE: Blocks where gun is placed.)

SCENE 8

No side props used.

SCENE 9

1858.

3 chairs at back.

Notes for Abe and others for Douglas.

Handkerchief (Douglas).

SCENE 10

1860.

Curtains and drapes changes.

Sofa moved to U. R. C.

Chair, L. C., and chair, D. L.

Pipe and tobacco (Robert).

Cigar and matches (Crimmin).

Doorbell which jangles.

SCENE 11

1860.

Table, D. L. C.

3 chairs by table.

Chair, U. R.

Spittoon.

Large two-column list of the then 33 states with electoral votes of each and pegs by each state name for hanging bulletins, on wall, back c.

Map of U. S. in 1860 with each state marked by a little flag on a pin, red, white or blue, on wall at back, L. of list of states.

American flag, 33 stars.

Newspaper clippings and despatches on table.

Extra flags for map including one white—one for Robert.

Cigars (Ninian, Josh and Crimmin).

Pads and pencils (Ninian and Josh).

Stack of bulletins with holes punched for hanging, off L. (Jed).

2 news despatches, off L. (Jed).

Megaphone, off L. (Jed).

Telegraph effect, off L.

SCENE 12

1861.

Carpet-bag (Abe).

Rifles or muskets for soldiers.

Shrill locomotive whistle.

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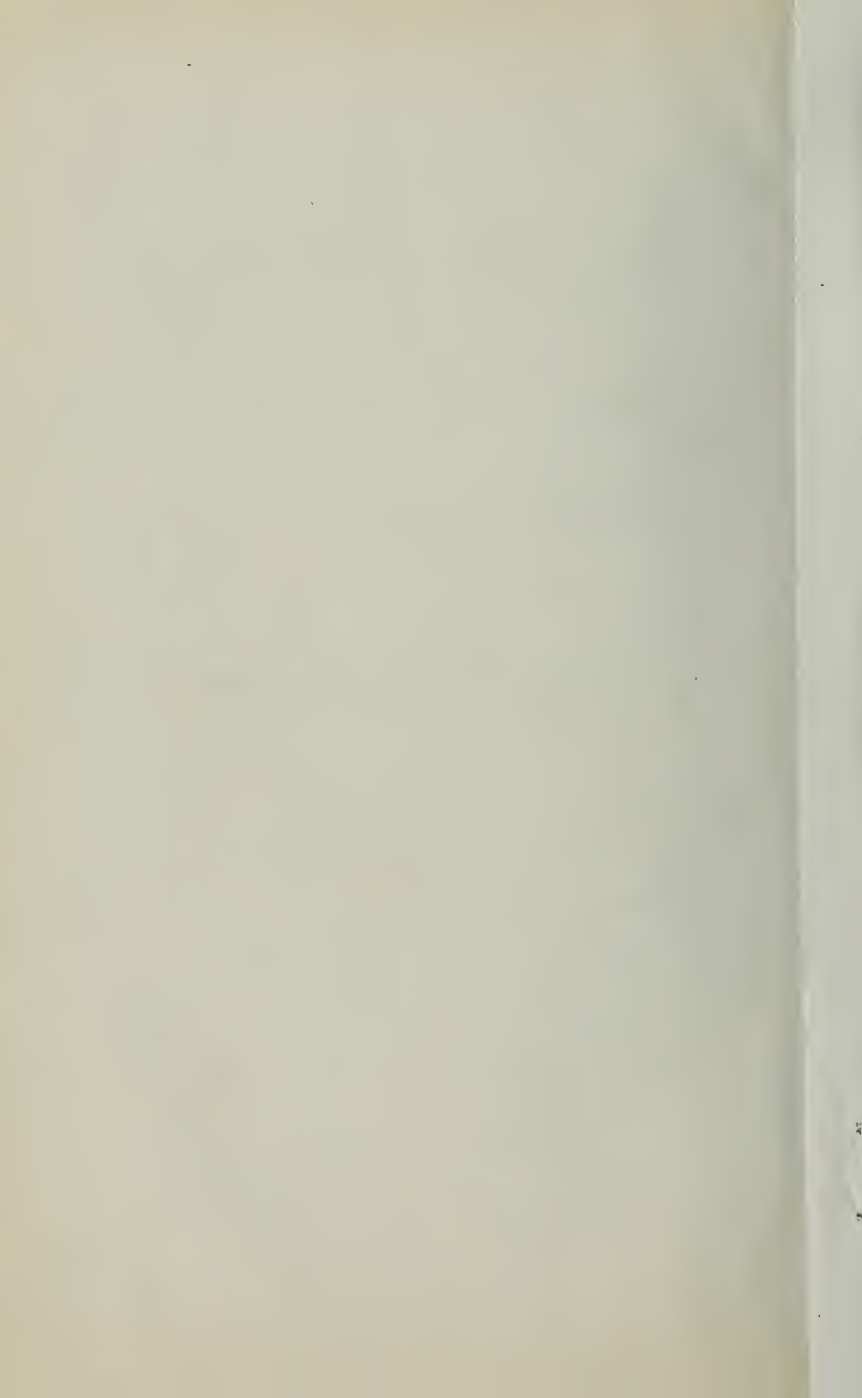
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